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SEPTEMBER, 1969 Vol. 43, No. 3

stories

HARLAN ELLISON'S OUTSTANDING NEW STORY

DOGFIGHT ON 101..... 6

NEW SHORT STORY

THE EDGE OF THE ROSE, JOE L. HENSLEY 15

NOVELETS

LOST TREASURE OF MARS, EDMOND HAMILTON 84

THE SHORTCUT, ROG PHILLIPS 104

NEW SERIAL

UP THE LINE, ROBERT SILVERBERG 20

(2nd of two parts)

NEW FEATURES

EDITORIAL, TED WHITE 4

CHARLY, Reviewed by LAURENCE JANIFER 19

WANTED—A NEW MYTH FOR TECHNOLOGY

(Science of Man), LEON E. STOVER 115

THE FUTURE IN BOOKS 121

THE CLUB HOUSE, JOHN D. BERRY 131

---OR SO YOU SAY 140

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editorial



As I write this the 1969 New York Lunacon is only a matter of hours past—although by the time you read this, April 12 and 13 will be somewhat more distant memories. The Lunacon is an annual “regional” sf convention, so-called because it bases its appeal on local attendance, is held by the same sponsoring group (the New York Lunarians) each year, and is one of a growing number of smaller conferences, conclaves and conventions which aim to supplement (rather than compete with) the annual World S.F. Convention. (The World S.F. Convention will be held in St. Louis this year; for information I suggest you contact the St. Louiscon Committee, P.O. Box 3008, St. Louis, Missouri 63130.) The Lunacon began as an annual meeting on a Sunday afternoon, usually held in a small meeting hall somewhere in lower or midtown Manhattan, and attracting less than a hundred attendees. However, the last few years have witnessed the conference's rapid growth, both in scope and attendance—from a single Sunday afternoon to a full weekend that begins with a sponsored party Friday evening, includes programs on Saturday afternoon and Sunday afternoon, and fades, finally, into quiet Sunday evening parties for those still hanging on—and from

several score in attendance ten years ago to over four hundred last year, and well over six hundred this year. And this year the Lunacon, enjoyed, as it has for the past several years, the facilities of a major New York hotel.

The rapid growth of the Lunacon is not an isolated occurrence. Less than ten years ago, the average World S.F. Convention had less than six hundred in attendance. But the last two world conventions have both had well over a thousand attendees, and the forecast for St. Louis is that two thousand may well show up! Other regional conferences are reporting attendance figures doubling or nearly doubling over those of the past year alone.

What this seems to mean is that the microcosm we call *science fiction fandom* is experiencing a sudden spurt of growth on a nation-wide basis. The number of people who are interested enough in science fiction to attend a conference or convention is rapidly multiplying. New fan groups are turning up all over, many with previously independent existences and only recently aware of a larger fandom.

It would be nice to hope that these new fans reflect an overall growth in the sf readership at large—and that the financially precarious existence of most sf

magazines (and many sf writers) might grow proportionately more stable. But that may only be a dream. Certainly many of these "new fans" are actually an outgrowth of *Star Trek*'s phenomenal popularity, and others are a result of other, "offshoot fandoms," such as Tolkien Fandom. Others yet are primarily interested in reading and trading comic books (and ignore the program and sf orientation of these conferences) or belong to what has sometimes been most appropriately called "Monster Fandom."

Many long-time sf fans have expressed dismay at the growing size of the conventions—even while organizers are alternately celebrating "our" increased importance and bemoaning the growing workload—and have wondered if the close-knit community feeling we once knew is certain to be lost.

I think this ties rather closely to the present contention expressed between the so-called "New Waves" and "Old Waves" of science fiction. We once felt a sense of community—and for many of us the New Wave seems to threaten it.

Science fiction has always been a fish out of water, a genre or sub-genre of fiction which has never relished its association with the other sub-genres of fiction. The early sf magazines—AMAZING STORIES the first among them—were not precisely "pulps"; they measured roughly 9" x 12", were printed on better quality paper, and had trimmed edges. Yet, they were classed as pulps, had covers nearly as lurid, and printed nothing but fiction—and a "sensationalistic" sort of fiction as well . . . *you know that rockets-to-the-moon nonsense is filling the boy's head with pernicious claptrap!* And all too soon, as the Depression took hold and the magazines began fighting for their lives, they

assumed the traditional ragged-edged pulp format as well. (Have you ever thumbed through an old pulp magazine? Have you ever *tried* to thumb through one? Let us all say a silent prayer for trimmed edges on our magazines.)

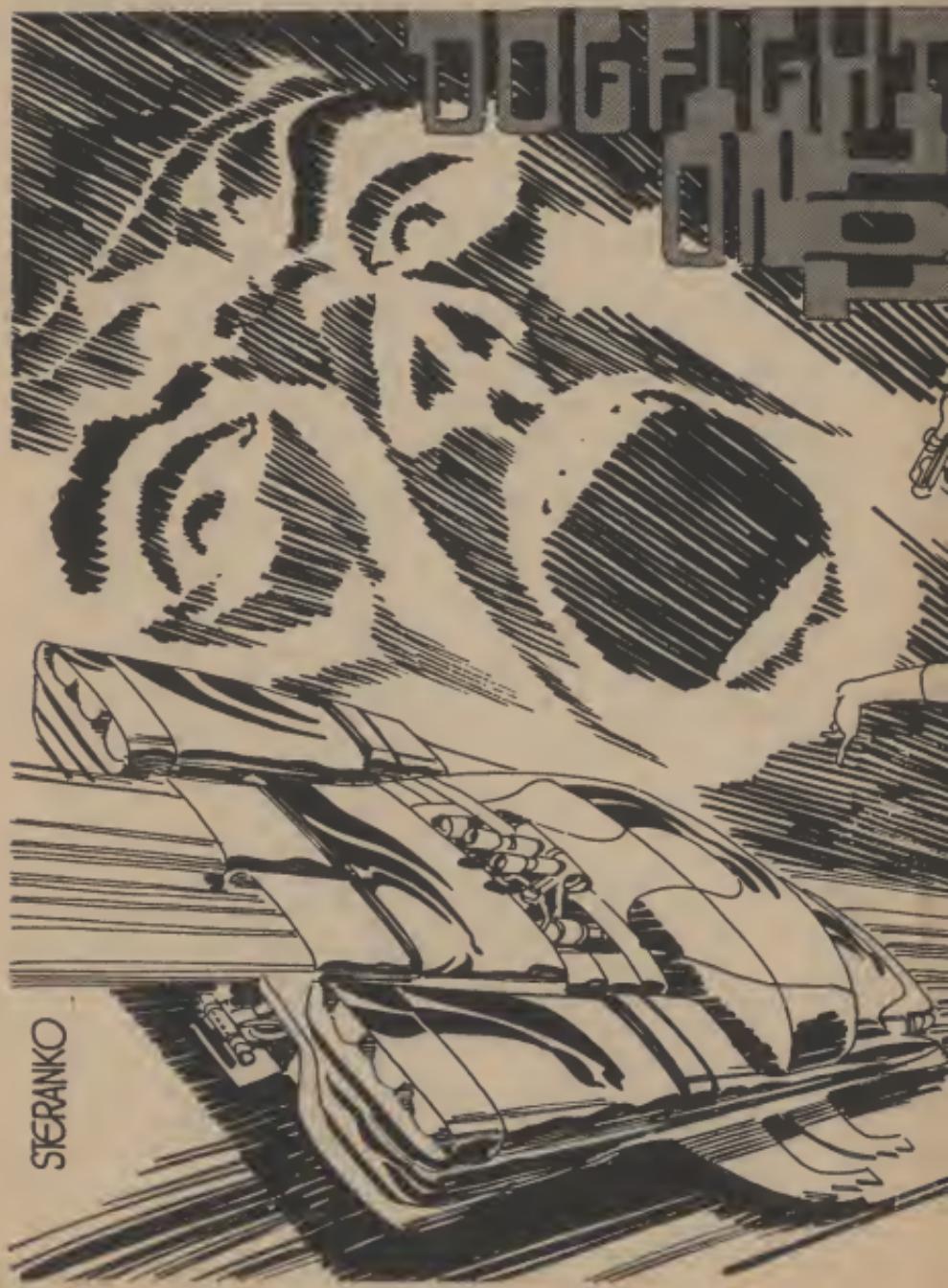
Once pulps among other pulps, sf magazines found themselves a part of great chains of magazines, their advertising sold by the yard to *Rupture-Easer* and *Beauty Around The World*, and *I Spoke With God—Yes I Did, Actually and Literally*. Even at the time I discovered the pulps—near the end of their domain—it was a commonly held belief that pulp magazines were for the semi-literates, and at least two stages in quality below comic books. A boy could buy a comic book openly; he was ashamed to be seen carrying a pulp.

We did not benefit from our exposure to this sordid literary industry. The lettercolumns of the sf pulps of the forties are full of tales of torn-off covers, hidden covers, and other signs of the paranoia which infected most of the magazines' readers. Our proud heritage of Wells and Verne was forgotten. Our magazines portrayed bosomy babes, monstrous bems, and orante rockets and rayguns on their covers—and it made no difference that their interior texts were moderately literate and well-written. People go by appearances—even us.

We sneered—sometimes unjustly—at the other pulps we found on the racks. Sports-story pulps, western pulps, mystery pulps, romance pulps, war-story pulps, masked-hero pulps—we sneered at all of them. Pulp trash, they were. We were something better. The sort of people who bought those *other* pulps moved their lips when they read; we had broad mental horizons and fine minds. (Never you mind that many of the same authors wrote for all the pulps,

(Continued on page 99)

DODGE CHARGER



STERANKO



by Harlan Ellison

Harlan Ellison is one of those rare individuals seemingly possessed of unlimited dynamic energy. In the thirteen years since he began writing professionally, he has written hundreds of stories (many, if not most, science fiction or fantasy), published almost two dozen books, written scores of television scripts, and several screenplays. Somewhere along the line he picked up three Hugos and a Nebula. Here's a story that has all of Ellison's own propulsive, kinetic energy, and looks like it just might add another award or two to his shelf—

The blood-red Mercury with the twin-mounted 7.6 mm Spandaus cut George off as he was shifting lanes. The Merc cut out sharply, three cars behind George, and the driver decked it. The boom of his gas-turbine engine got through George's baffling system without difficulty, like a fist in the ear. The Merc sprayed JP-4 gook and water in a wide fan from its jet nozzle and cut back in, a matter of inches in front of George's Chevy Piranha.

George slapped the selector control on the dash, lighting YOU STUPID BASTARD, WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING and I HOPE YOU CRASH & BURN, YOU SON OF A BITCH. Jessica moaned softly with uncontrolled fear, but George could not hear her: he was screaming obscenities.

George kicked it into Overplunge and depressed the selector button extending the rotating buzzsaws. Dallas razors, they were called, in the repair shoppes. But the crimson Merc pulled away doing an easy 115.

"I'll get you, you beaver-sucker!" he howled.

The Piranha jumped and surged forward. But the Merc was already two dozen car-lengths down the Freeway. Adrenalin pumped in geysers through

George's system. Beside him, Jessica put a hand on his arm. "Oh, forget it, George; it's just some young snot," she said. Always conciliatory.

"My masculinity's threatened," he murmured, and hunched over the wheel. Jessica looked toward Heaven, wishing a bolt of lightning had come from that location many months past, striking Dr. Yasinir directly in his Freud, long before George could have picked up psychiatric justifications for his awful temper.

"Get me Collision Control!" George snarled at her.

Jessica shrugged, as if to say *here we go again*, and dialed CC on the peek. The smiling face of the Freeway Sector Control Operator blurred green and yellow, then came into sharp focus. "Your request, sir?"

"Clearance for duel, Highway 101, northbound."

"Your license number, sir?"

"ZUPD 88321," George said. He was scanning the Freeway, keeping the blood-red Mercury in sight, obstinately refusing to stud-on the tracking sights.

"Your proposed opponent, sir?"

"Red Mercury GT. '88 model."

"License, sir."

"Just a second." George pressed the

stud for the instant replay and the past ten miles rolled back on the movieola. He ran it forward again till he caught the instant the Merc had passed him, stopped the film, and got the number. "MFCS 90909."

"One moment, sir."

George fretted behind the wheel. "Now what the hell's holding her up? Whenever you want service, they've got problems. But boy, when it comes tax time—"

The Operator came back and smiled. "I've checked our master Sector grid, sir, and I find authorization may be permitted, but I am required by law to inform you that your proposed opponent is more heavily armed than yourself."

George licked his lips. "What's he running?"

"Our records indicate 7.6 mm Span-dau equipment, bulletproof screens and coded optionals."

George sat silently. His speed dropped. The tachometer fluttered, settled.

"Let him go, George," Jessica said, "you know he'd take you."

Two blotches of anger spread on George's cheeks. "Oh, yeah?!" He howled at the Operator, "Get me a confirm on that Mercury, Operator!"

She blurred off, and George decked the Piranha; it leaped forward. Jessica sighed with resignation and pulled the drawer out from beneath her bucket. She unfolded the g-suit and began stretching into it. She said nothing, but continued to shake her head.

"We'll see!" George said.

"Oh, George, when will you ever grow up?"

He did not answer, but his nostrils flared with barely-restrained anger.

The Operator smeared back and said, "Opponent confirms, sir. Freeway Underwriters have already cross-filed you

as mutual beneficiaries. Please observe standard traffic regulations, and good luck, sir."

She vanished, and George set the Piranha on sleepwalker as he donned his own g-suit. He overrode the sleeper and was back on manual in moments.

"Now, you stuffer, now let's see!" 100, 110, 120.

He was gaining rapidly on the Merc now. As the Chevy hit 120, the master-comp flashed red and suggested cross-over. George punched the selector and the telescoping arms of the buzzsaws retracted into the axles, even as the buzzsaws stopped whirling. In a moment they had been drawn back in, now merely fancy decorations in the hubcaps. The wheels retracted into the underbody of the Chevy and the air-cushion took over. Now the Chevy skimmed along, two inches above the roadbed of the Freeway.

Ahead, George could see the Merc also crossing over to air-cushion. 120, 135, 150.

"George, this is crazy!" Jessica said, her face in that characteristic shrike expression. "You're no hotrodder, George. You're a family man, and this is the family car!"

George chuckled nastily. "I've had it with these fuzzfaces. Last year . . . you remember last year? . . . you remember when that punk stuffer ran us into the abutment? I swore I'd never put up with that kind of thing again. Why'd you think I had all the optionals installed?"

Jessica opened the tambour doors of the glove compartment and slid out the service tray. She unplugged the jar of anti-flash salve and began spreading it on her face and hands. "I knew I shouldn't have let you put that laser thing in this car!" George chuckled again. Fuzzfaces, punks, rodders!

George felt the Piranha surge forward, the big reliable stirling engine recycling the hot air for more and more efficient thrust. Unlike the Merc's inefficient kerosene system, there was no exhaust emission from the nuclear power plant, the external combustion engine almost noiseless, the big radiator tailfin in the rear dissipating the tremendous heat, stabilizing the car as it swooshed along, two inches off the roadbed.

George knew he would catch the blood-red Mercury. Then one smartass punk was going to learn he couldn't flout law and order by running decent citizens off the Freeways!

"Get me my gun," George said.

Jessica shook her head with exasperation, reached under George's bucket, pulled out his drawer and handed him the bulky .45 automatic in its breakaway upside-down shoulder rig. George studded in the sleeper, worked his arms into the rig, tested the oiled leather of the holster, and when he was satisfied, returned the Piranha to manual.

"Oh, God," Jessica said, "John Dillinger rides again."

"Listen!" George shouted, getting more furious with each stupidity she offered, "If you can't be of some help to me, just shut your damned mouth. I'd put you out and come back for you, but I'm in a duel . . . can you understand that! *I'm in a duel!*" She murmured a yes, George, and fell silent.

There was a transmission queep from the transceiver. George studded it on. No picture. Just vocal. It had to be the driver of the Mercury, up ahead of them. Beaming directly at one another's antennae, using a tight-beam directional, they could keep in touch: it was a standard trick used by rods to rattle their opponents.

"Hey, Boze, you not really gonna custer me, are you? Back'm, Boze. No bad trips, true. The kid'll drop back, hang a couple of biggies on ya, just to teach ya little lesson, letcha swimaway." The voice of the driver was hard, mirthless, the ugly sound of a driver used to being challenged.

"Listen, you young snot," George said, grating his words, trying to sound more menacing than he felt, "I'm going to teach *you* the lesson!"

The Merc's driver laughed raucously.

"Boze, you *de-mote* me, true!"

"And stop calling me a bozo, you lousy little degenerate!"

"Ooooo-weeee, got me a thrasher this time out. Okay, Boze, you be custer an' I'll play arrow. Good shells, baby Boze!"

The finalizing queep sounded, and George gripped the wheel with hands that went knuckle-white. The Merc suddenly shot away from him. He had been steadily gaining, but now as though it had been spring-loaded, the Mercury burst forward, spraying gook and water on both sides of the forty-foot lanes they were using. "Cut in his afterburner," George snarled. The driver of the Mercury had injected water into the exhaust for added thrust through the jet nozzle. The boom of the Merc's big, noisy engine hit him, and George studded-in the rear-mounted propellors to give him more speed. 175. 185. 195.

He was crawling up the line toward the Merc. Gaining, gaining. Jessica pulled out her drawer and unfolded her crash-suit. It went on over the g-suit, and she let George know what she thought of his turning their Sunday Drive into a kamikaze duel.

He told her to stuff, and did a sleeper, donned his own crash-suit, applied flash salve, and lowered the bangup helmet

over his head.

Back on manual he crawled, crawled, till he was only fifty yards behind the Mercury, the gas-turbine vehicle sharp in his tinted windshield. "Put on your goggles . . . I'm going to show that punk who's a bozo . . ."

He pressed the stud to open the laser louvres. The needle-nosed glass tube peered out from its bay in the Chevy's bonnet. George read the power drain on his dash. The MHD power generator used to drive the laser was charging. He remembered what the salesman at Chick Williams Chevrolet had told him, proudly, about the laser gun, when George had inquired about the optional.

Dynamite feature, Mr. Jackson. Absolutely sensational. Works off a magneto hydro dynamic power generator. Latest thing in defense armament. You know, to achieve sufficient potency from a CO₂ laser, you'd need a glass tube a mile long. Well, sir, we both know that's impractical, to say the least, so the project engineers at Chevy's big Bombay plant developed the "stack" method. Glass rods baffled with mirrors—360 feet of stack, the length of a football field . . . plus end-zones. Use it three ways. Punch a hole right through their tires at any speed under a hundred and twenty. If they're running a GT, you can put that hole right into the kerosene fuel tank, blow them off the road. Or, if they're running a Stirling, just heat the radiator. When the radiator gets hotter than the engine, the whole works shuts down. Dynamite. Also . . . and this is with proper CC authorization, you can go straight for the old jugular. Use the beam on the driver. Makes a neat hole. Dynamite!

"I'll take it," George murmured.

"What did you say?" Jessica asked.

"Nothing."

"George, you're a family man, not a rodder!"

"Stuff it!"

Then he was sorry he'd said it. She meant well. It was simply that . . . well, a man had to work hard to keep his balls. He looked sidewise at her. Wearing the Armadillo crash-suit, with its overlapping discs of ceramic material, she looked like a ferryflight pilot. The bang-up hat hid her face. He wanted to apologize, but the moment had arrived. He locked the laser on the Merc, depressed the fire stud, and a beam of blinding light flashed from the bonnet of the Piranha. With the Merc on air-cushion, he had gone straight for the fuel tank.

But the Merc suddenly wasn't in front of him. Even as he had fired, the driver had sheered left into the next forty-foot-wide lane, and cut speed drastically. The Merc dropped back past them as the Piranha swooshed ahead.

"He's on my back!" George shouted.

The next moment Spandau slugs tore at the hide of the Chevy. George slapped the studs and the bulletproof screens went up. But not before pingholes had appeared in the beryllium hide of the Chevy, exposing the boron fiber filaments that gave the car its lightweight maneuverability. "Stuffer!" George breathed, terribly frightened. The driver was on his back, could ride him into the ground.

He swerved, dropping flaps and skimming the Piranha back and forth in wide arcs, across the two lanes. The Merc hung on. The Spandaus chattered heavily. The screens would hold, but what else was the driver running? What were the "coded optionals" the CC Operator had mentioned?

"Now see what you've gotten us into!"

"Jess, shut up, shut up!"

The transceiver queeped. He studded it on, still swerving. This time the driver of the Merc was sending via microwave video. The face blurred in.

He was a young boy. In his teens.

"Punk! Stinking punk!" George screamed, trying to swerve, drop back, accelerate. Nothing. The blood-red Merc hung on his tailfin, pounding at him. If one of those bullets struck the radiator tailfin, ricocheted, pierced to the engine, got through the lead shielding around the reactor. Jessica was crying, huddled inside her Armadillo.

He was silently glad she was in the g-suit. He would try something illegal in a moment.

"Hey, Boze. What's your slit look like? If she's creamy'n'nice I might letcha drop her at the next getty, and come back for her later. With your insurance, baby, and my pickle, I can keep her creamy'n'nice."

"Fuzzfaced punk! I'll see you dead first!"

"You're a real thrasher, old dad. Wish you well, but it's soon over. Say bye-bye to the nice rodder. You gonna die, old boze!"

George was shrieking inarticulately.

The boy laughed wildly. He was up on something. Ferro-coke, perhaps. Or D4. Or merryloo. His eyes glistened blue and young and deadly as a snake.

"Just wanted you to know the name of your piledriver, old dad. You can call me Billy . . ."

And he was gone. The Merc slipped forward, closer, and George had only a moment to realize that this Billy could not possibly have the money to equip his car with a laser, and that was a godsend. But the Spandaus were hacking away at the bulletproof screens.

They weren't meant for extended punishment like this. Damn that Detroit iron!

He had to make the illegal move now.

Thank God for the g-suits. A tight turn, across the lanes, in direct contravention of the authorization. And in a tight turn, without the g-suits, doing—he checked the speedometer and tach—250 mph, the blood slams up against one side of the body. The g-suits would squeeze the side of the body where the blood tried to pool up. They would live. If . . .

He spun the wheel hard, slamming down on the accelerator. The Merc slewed sidewise and caught the turn. He never had a chance. He pulled out of the illegal turn, and their positions were the same. But the Merc had dropped back several car-lengths. Then from the transceiver there was a queep and he did not even stud-in as the Police Copter overhead tightbeamed him in an authoritative voice:

"XUPD 88321. Warning! You will be in contravention of your dueling authorization if you try another maneuver of that sort! You are warned to keep to your lanes and the standard rules of road courtesy!"

Then it queeped, and George felt the universe settling like silt over him. He was being killed by the system.

He'd have to eject. The seats would save him and Jessica. He tried to tell her, but she had fainted.

How did I get into this, he pleaded with himself. Dear God, I swear if you get me out of this alive I'll never never never go mad like this again. Please God.

Then the Merc was up on him again, pulling up *alongside!*

The window went down on the passenger side of the Mercury, and George whipped a glance across to see Billy

with his lips skinned back from his teeth behind the windblast and acceleration, aiming a .45 at him. Barely thinking, George studded the bumpers.

The super-conducting magnetic bumpers took hold, sucked Billy into their magnetic field, and the cars collided with a crash that shook the .45 out of the rodder's hand. In the instant of collision, George realized he had made his chance, and dropped back. In a moment he was riding the Merc's tail again.

Naked barbarism took hold. He wanted to kill now. Not crash the other, not wound the other, not stop the other—kill the other. Messages to God were forgotten.

He locked-in the laser and aimed for the windshield bubble. His sights caught the rear of the bubble, fastened to the outline of Billy's head, and George fired.

As the bolt of light struck the bubble, a black spot appeared, and remained for the seconds the laser touched. When the light cut off, the black spot vanished. George cursed, screamed, cried, in fear and helplessness.

The Merc was equipped with a frequency-sensitive laserproof windshield. Chemicals in the windshield would "go black", opaque at certain frequencies, momentarily, anywhere a laser light touched them. He should have known. A duelist like this Billy, trained in weaponry, equipped for whatever might chance down a Freeway. Another coded optional. George found he was crying, piteously, within the cavern of his bangup hat.

Then the Merc was swerving again, executing a roll and dip that George could not understand, could not predict. Then the Merc dropped speed suddenly, and George found himself almost running up the jet nozzle of the blood-

red vehicle.

He spun out and around, and Billy was behind him once more, closing in for the kill. He sent the propellers to full spin and reached for eternity. 270. 280. 290.

Then he heard the sizzling, and jerked his head around to see the back wall of the car rippling. *Oh my God*, he thought, in terror, *he can't afford a laser, but he's got an inductor beam!*

The beam was setting up strong local eddy currents in the beryllium hide of the Chevy. He'd rip a hole in the skin, the air would whip through, the car would go out of control.

George knew he was dead.

And Jessica.

And all because of this punk, this rodder fuzzface!

The Merc closed in confidently.

George thought wildly. There was no time for anything but the blind plunging panic of random thought. The speedometer and the tach agreed. They were doing 300 mph.

Riding on air-cushions.

The thought slipped through his panic.

It was the only possibility. He ripped off his bangup hat, and fumbled Jessica's loose. He hugged them in his lap with his free hand, and managed to stud down the window on the driver's side. Instantly, a blast of wind and accelerated air skinned back his lips, plastered his cheeks hollowly, made a death's head of Jessica's features.

Then, holding the bangup hats by their straps, he forced them around the edge of the window where the force of his speed jammed them against the side of the Chevy. Then he let go. And studded up the window. And braked sharply.

The bulky bangup hats dropped away, hit the roadbed, rolled directly into the

path of the Merc. They disappeared underneath the blood-red car, and instantly the vehicle hit the Freeway. George swerved out of the way, dropping speed quickly.

The Merc hit with a crash, bounced, hit again, bounced and hit, bounced and hit. As it went past the Piranha, George saw Billy caroming off the insides of the car.

He watched the vehicle skid, wheelless, for a quarter of a mile down the Freeway before it caught the inner breakwall of the lane-divider, shot high in the air, and came down turning over. It landed on the bubble, which burst, and exploded in a flash of fire and smoke that rocked the Chevy.

At three hundred miles per hour, two inches above the Freeway, riding on air, anything that broke up the air bubble would be a lethal weapon. He had won the duel. That Billy was dead.

George pulled in at the next getty, and sat in the lot. Jessica came around finally. He was slumped over the wheel, shaking, unable to speak.

She looked over at him, then reached out a hand to touch his shoulder. He jumped at the infinitesimal pressure, felt through the g and crash suits. She started to speak, but the peek queeped, and she studded it on.

"Sector Control, sir," the Operator smiled.

He did not look up.

"Congratulations, sir. Despite one possible infraction, your duel has been logged as legal and binding. You'll be pleased to know that the occupant of the car you challenged was rated number one in the entire Central and Eastern Freeway circuit. Now that Mr. Bonney has been finalized, we are entering your name on the dueling records. Underwriters have asked us to inform you that a check will be in the mails to you

within twenty-four hours.

"Again, sir, congratulations."

The peek went dead, and George tried to focus on the parking lot of the neon and silver getty. It had been a terrible experience. He never wanted to use a car that way again. It had been some other George, certainly not him.

"I'm a family man," he repeated Jessica's words. "And this is just a family car . . . I . . ."

She was smiling gently at him. Then they were in each other's arms, and he was crying, and she was saying that's all right, George, you had to do it, it's all right.

And the peek queeped.

She studded it on and the face of the Operator smiled back at her. "Congratulations, sir, you'll be pleased to know that Sector Control already has fifteen duel challenges for you.

"Mr. Ronnie Lee Hauptman of Dallas has asked for first challenge, and is, at this moment, speeding toward you with an ETA of 6:15 this evening. In the event Mr. Hauptman does not survive, you have waiting challenges from Mr. Fred Bull of Chatsworth, California . . . Mr. Leo Fowler of Philadelphia . . . Mr. Emil Zalenko of . . ."

George did not hear the list. He was trying desperately, with clubbed fingers, to extricate himself from the strangling folds of the g and crash suits. But he knew it was no good. He would have to fight.

In the world of the Freeway, there was no place for a walking man.

— Harlan Ellison

The Author wishes to thank Mr. Ben Bova of the Avco Everett Research Laboratory (Everett, Mass.) for his assistance in preparing the extrapolative technical background of this story.

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THE EDGE OF THE ROSE

It's an ethical problem: how easily can you weigh the lives of a handful of beings—alien beings at that—against the lives of a thousand or more of your own people? Especially if the aliens are lying on the ground in front of you, and you are countless lightyears from your home planet?

JOE L. HENSLEY

Now, in the alien morning, the double suns beat down on the men lined outside the "gather" ship. The sky was an envious green and the land was gullied and arid.

Milton Tosti stood at the end of the row listening to Doctor Hapan.

The Doctor's voice was clear over the earphones. "You men know what you have been trained for, the job you must do. Time is short. The plants we seek began blooming this morning at our best estimate. Many of them have already been located by the men at the small outpost we keep here. You will try to locate others. We need them all." His voice stopped and then began again. "Perhaps this time we will find enough." He turned away quickly and Tosti knew why. He knew where Doctor Hapan's wife was.

Tosti felt no pity for Doctor Hapan. The feeling was more one of empathy. Almost every man on the "gather" ship had someone, someone close, in an institution. Why else would a man take the chance of coming to this beaten world, enduring the monotony and danger of the journey, for sixty hours of frenzied searching?

Tosti remembered a man who had

been warm and real and kind—his father. And then he had been nothing. A vacant-eyed sitter in the sun, arms and legs that moved when they were moved, all sound lost, all love, then all life.

It was a product of environment. The physical ailments were conquered, but mental ailments doubled and tripled and doubled again. Life was too technical, too complex, on a planet gone wild with factories supplying jewel-like parts for the light drive, on a planet still divided politically, where any day might bring the end. And men, the good ones, the ones who thought and tried, retreated from it all far too often—back to the warmth of the womb, security and total dependency. And ten years of research, following that of the hundreds of years before, had found no solutions.

Until the Tanna plant.

Tosti shivered in the heat of his suit. Someone yelled at him and he came back to the here and now. He climbed into the tiny scout with the others, the ship that would drop him at his assigned grounds.

The first day was futile. Occasionally he came upon a cut vine already marked and collected.

Once, along the somber skyline, he caught a glimpse of something moving. He waved and turned on the suit's tiny radio, thinking he might have crossed into someone else's territory.

"Hello," he called.

There was no answer. Only the wind came, blowing traces of the hot soil against his helmet, carrying the currents of acid, unbreathable atmosphere.

For awhile he waited and then went on. It might have been one of the natives of the planet. This was Tosti's third trip. On his first he had seen one of those natives, but the thing had retreated away as soon as it caught sight of him.

Man had been his usual bumbling self in the acquisition of extra-territorial rights. The beings of this planet had reason to flee.

Tosti went on searching.

When darkness of that first day came he rested in the lee of a hill. He sipped water and touched his belt control for food and anti-sleep. His helmet light picked out clumps of prickly vegetation, lighter purple against the black soil.

He thought about himself without much hope. He had lived twenty-seven years without knowing where he was going. He had been trained as a doctor of medicine in a world where such training was almost unneeded—except for psychiatrists—and that he could never be. The disintegration and death of his father had filled him with two things that together precluded being a psychiatrist. The first was an almost unreasoning hatred for the thing that had made his father a vegetable. The second was much worse—so bad it was near a psychosis. It was a fear the same thing would happen to him. He had dreaded his visits to the asylum, even hated the thing who had once been his father. He

had reasoned with himself that his feeling was the instinct of self-preservation, but it was now something he could not even force himself to try to fight.

So he was a "searcher." It scratched a part of his itch. The "searchers" had been set up long before the swift rise of mental illness, but they had risen to prominence because of it. A searcher ship had found the plants on this world, *the plant* among ten thousand others. A searcher ship had found the Dannin Bush on Gavna III and the Kanzy roots on Veltagus, now known specifics for cancer treatment.

But Tosti wanted to be a doctor in a world where the need dwindled. He wanted to be as his father had been. But he knew he would never be.

The night had grown dark around him. One tiny satellite sped across the sky of Tanna. The stars were unfriendly points of blurred light, obscured by the hazy atmosphere.

Back on Earth he knew that researchers were working on synthesization, but so far the plant had defied it.

He turned his light on full and began the search again.

In the late afternoon of the second day he discovered a clump of the Tanna plants.

Most of that day he'd spent in running a deep crevice between rock walls, fumbling in the harsh black soil.

The clump was the largest he'd ever seen, but there was no feeling of triumph. All twenty of the plants that he counted appeared as if they were ready to enter the metamorphic change that ruined them for human use. They shimmered a dark green and then a lighter green, the trailing leaves speckled with tiny white spots, the tendril flowers at the top drooping and weary.

Instructions were plain. He cut the stalks quickly with his soil knife and put them in the container that bulged from the side of his suit. Now he was supposed to find high ground and call the ship. The plants would be fit for use only for a short time in the heat of the planet—only deep freeze could effectively preserve them. And he had to gain that elevation. Communication was uncertain on this world. The double suns blanketed radio, the valleys and mountains ate it.

He started up. The crevice had run deep. Far above him, thousands of feet higher, he could see the crest lines of the hills.

He came upon the natives before he had made even a start. They lay at the side of the path he was following. There were four of them.

They were a dying race and man had been the cause of that. Not by intention, but the micro-organisms that man carried with him attacked these creatures hungrily. By the time the first explorer from earth realized, it was too late. Tosti had seen them at a distance, but this was his first real sight of them. They had a curious grace, even in dying. They were radially symmetrical, thin-boned.

He bent over the closest of the four. The wide, green eyes gleamed up at him, slightly filmed, still alive. Great blue blotches marred reddish skin. The eyes watched him asking nothing, expecting nothing. He knew enough about them to understand that this was their way. They were somewhat intelligent. Another race would have fought the thing that brought death. They were non-cultured, their artifacts few. They did not seem to care. They had fled the thing that caused death, but they had not fought it. And there were too many

more interesting newly discovered cultures for even the anthropologists to care greatly.

He examined the other three cursorily. They were the same. He could see that they breathed with difficulty and from the scummy eyes and lethargic movements he suspected a rising fever. He was almost certain that they were deep in some respiratory infection. In a man it might have been a bad cold.

Here, it was a nearness to death.

He had nothing to treat them with, but he could build them a fire. With the high fever, if they weren't kept warm, they would die in the approaching night. He gathered dried vegetation into a large pile. He set the fire with the lighter from his tiny tool pouch. The fire was slow, but it would still have to be replenished. He moved them up close around it. One of them, the first one he'd examined, seemed more conscious than the others. His eyes watched Tosti.

He said something in a soft, raspy voice and Tosti moved his helmeted head closer to hear.

"Knana?" the thing said again.

It meant nothing to Tosti, but he nodded, knowing his face was partly masked by the helmet.

"Knana," he said back.

He saw the creature relax and something went dead in him. Whatever it was that had been asked his answer had satisfied. But it was a promise he could not fulfill.

He looked at his chronometer. Three hours had passed since he'd cut the plants. He frowned, astonished and alarmed. The plants he had, properly processed, might take a thousand men out of incurable wards, make those men human again. The plant refused cultivation, resisted transplanting. The ones in his pouch might be good for eight or

ten more hours. But he had to call the ship by then.

He gathered rocks and made a wind-break when the fire began to dance, watching the skyline all of the time. It would be at least an hour up and not quite so long back. In that time the fire would die, and the cold night air, after the warmth, would quickly kill. Four lives against a thousand.

He made his decision and walked to the edge of the light from the fire and started up the path. The one creature who was still conscious watched him and Tosti could see the eyes shining in the firelight. But there was nothing there for Tosti, no pleading. Only a small defeat there.

Tosti would have made it away then if one of the beings hadn't rolled too near the fire and cried in pain. Tosti cursed himself and the facts and the creatures, but he ran quickly back to the fire and rolled the shrieking thing away from it. The screams had been too human and needing. The decision to leave could still be postponed. There was time.

Once again the eyes of the conscious creature came even with his own and this time Tosti did not have to bend close.

"Knana?" the creature was asking again.

Tosti sat back down by the fire and inclined his head twice. "Knana," he said loudly.

He rebuilt the fire five more times that night and strengthened the rock windbreak when the night breeze stifened.

He waited for the light of day, afraid to open the case at his side and inspect the plants, afraid of what he would find. When the suns came up he would leave.

He dozed slightly then, despite the anti-sleep.

The dream came clearly. There was his father and his long dead mother. There was a night sky, full of moon and stars, clear as a whistle. There was a fire burning in the dream and meat to roast over it and cold lemonade. There was his father's hand on his own. It was a picnic. The three of them, just the three, before the fire, but off in the darkness the voices of other children playing.

It was a dream that Tosti had dreamed so many times before that he almost knew it for what it was.

His father said: "Do what you want, Miltie." The big hand covered his own again. "Don't want to be me. Be you."

And his own voice in lost treble: "I want to be what you are. I want to be a doctor."

It was a dream of laughter and good days. It was a well remembered dream.

There was a waking.

He came back to awareness. The first thing he saw was the open container at the side of his suit. The plants were gone.

Small leaves lay on the ground near his feet. He knew those leaves

The creatures were gone.

He sat there for a moment and pondered it, but it was too easy. One of the creatures had opened his pouch and taken the plants. Looking at the ground around the fire he could see the leaves spread in three other piles in addition to the one at his feet. They had eaten the plants and the plants had made them well, at least well enough to leave.

He went high up, looking back several times, but he did not see them.

He called the ship.

The time of gathering had passed.

He did not know what to say to Doctor Hapan and so he said nothing. Someday, perhaps, he would tell Hapan about it, but not in this year when the yield

(Continued on page 130)

CHARLY

Laurence M. Janifer

I have never, I think, been so greatly saddened at writing a review.

The novella, *FLOWERS FOR ALGERNON* by Daniel Keyes, was a perfect work; the novel which expanded it also diluted it to the point where it was at least arguable that Keyes had never seen, or could not deal with, the real strength of the original material; the television play, *THE TWO FACES OF CHARLY GORDON*, was (in the main due to Cliff Robertson) a minor masterpiece. The movie, *CHARLY*, is a disaster.

Something seems to have happened to Robertson. Perhaps it was *PT-109*, perhaps simply the movie business as opposed to the (more congenial toward talent) TV business. Perhaps it was a combination of Sterling Silliphant's script, Ralph Nelson's production and direction, and the necessity to play up to some very fancy camera work by Nelson-and-hirelings.

But Robertson has lost Charly almost entirely. The scalding pathos and understanding that exist in the novella and the TV adaptation, and, though diluted, even in the novel, have gone right out the window: the trial, triumph and crucifixion of Charly Gordon as his IQ is raised from less-than-70 to (unmeasurable) and then begins to recede again, is made every bit as meaningful, emo-

tionally and every other way, as the struggle and triumph of Roy Rogers in any film you can think of. Since the picture, as the title tells us, centers on Charly, this entire lack in Robertson is the picture's first, and most important, move toward death.

The script comes next. Sterling Silliphant has been writing, both for the movies and TV over quite a number of years now, a sort of *SATURDAY EVENING POST* story whose essential components are drawn from (say) *PARIS REVIEW*. This sort of thing gives the *SEP* reader a feeling of daring, the *PR* reader a feeling that the level of the mass media is rising, and Sterling Silliphant a great deal of money. *CHARLY* is one more example of this sort of watering-down, this sort of making-it-easy-on-the-audience, this sort of appalling simplification. It resembles the original novella about as much, and in about the same way, that the *Classic Comics HAMLET* resembles Shakespeare. Ralph Nelson and his photographers, to their credit, try to make up for this: since there is very little of any worth to show, the camera concentrates on split-screen work, on some very fine and meaningful nature shots, and on one fantasy-sequence which, unfortunately, depends for its emotion on the real situation out of which it springs; it tries hard but cannot do

(Continued on page 139)

To know Pulcheria is to love her, and that's where the trouble lies! Pulcheria, you see, is my great-great-great-multi-great-grandmother . . . and you wouldn't believe the Time Paradoxes involved!

UP THE LINE

ROBERT SILVERBERG

Second of two Parts

Illustrated by DAN ADKINS

SYNOPSIS

It all started when I shucked a meaningless job with the Manhattan County More Supreme Court, Upper. I lasted eight days, and then I hopped the first pod southbound.

I ended up gawking at the front of a sniffer palace on Under Bourbon Street, Level Three of New Orleans, and that's where I met SAM. SAM the guru was a black man, became a good and trusted friend, and ultimately recruited me for the Time Service. Oh yes: I'm JUDSON DANIEL ELLIOTT III. Friends call me JUD.

Research into the Benchley Effect began toward the end of the last century, but we've only had the Time Service and commercial tourism of the past for the last twenty years. The Service is divided into two divisions. The square-jawed, true-blue types go into the Time Patrol; they police the past for time-

crimes and time-errors which might alter the flow of time and introduce Change. The rest of us are Couriers and it is our task to guide the tourists up the line.

The Time Service does a lot more than supervise sightseeing into the past, of course, but the fees the tourists pay help subsidize the more scholarly undertakings.

I went through an extensive training program, beginning with a short jaunt up the line with SAM to the point where we first met. It was disorienting to see myself like that—from the outside, for the first time—and the complexities of juggling now-time and then-time and their interrelationship weren't easy for me. The paradoxes never stopped bothering me entirely, either. The biggest—and the one that has everyone worried—is the fact that although we take only small groups of tourists, half a dozen to a dozen, up the line each tour, we are taking them all to fixed spots in the past.

Like, for instance, the Crucifixion Tour. The first time-traveler to go up the line to Golgotha was Barney Navarre, in 2012. Over the next two decades another fifteen or twenty experimentalists made the same trip. Since commercial tours began on that run in 2041, approximately one group a month, or one hundred tourists a year, has viewed the scene. That means that so far at least 1800 twenty-first century tourists have observed the Crucifixion. Each of these groups is leaving from a different month, but every one of them is converging on the same day. Think about that. If tourists continue to go up the line at a rate of 100 a year to see the Crucifixion, the crowd at Golgotha will consist of at least 10,000 time-travelers by the middle of the next century. Why aren't they all there now? Apparently it's all a function of now-time: each time we take more tourists back up the line (suitably garbed in the clothes of the era, of course; nothing conspicuous or anachronistic), the past is changed a little and that crowd grows larger. Taken to its ultimate, this Cumulative Audience Paradox would end up with an audience of billions of time-travelers piled up in the past to witness the Crucifixion, filling all the Holy Land and spreading out into Turkey, into Arabia, even to India and Iran. And the same holds true for every other significant event in human history: as commercial time-travel progresses, it must inevitably smother every event in a horde of spectators, even though during the original occurrence of those events no such hordes were present!

That's just one of the Paradoxes I've learned to deal with (or to ignore).

On my earliest training jaunts I assisted other Couriers, learning from their examples. With JEFF MONROE I went back to the assassination of Huey Long.



With SID BUONOCORE I did 1803 and the Louisiana Purchase run (all those early jaunts were local to the New Orleans area—time-travel doesn't involve spatial travel). SAM told me that SID BUONOCORE had been demoted from the Renaissance run. "The Time Patrol caught him pimping lady tourists to Cesare Borgia. The tourist gals paid him nicely, and so did Cesare. Buonocore claimed he was just doing his job—letting his girls get a deeper experience of the Renaissance, you know. But they pulled him back here and stuck him on Louisiana Purchase." Nonetheless, SID seemed to have a few angles working for him in 1803, when I went back with him: currency manipulations of some sort; I never sorted it all out. But he was a good Courier. He knew his business.

Ultimately they sent me to Istanbul, for the Byzantium run. This would be my run; I was a graduate student in Byzantine history.

I had nine colleagues, five of whom were up the line when I arrived. SPIROS PROTOPOPOLOS was about thirty, plump, sleek, with sunglasses and a great many white teeth. MELAMED was German, fair-haired and hid behind a dense sandy beard. CAPISTRANO was a slick, dark-haired Spaniard who later on, deep in his cups, confided to me that his great-grandmother had been a Turk. He may have invented that so I'd despise him; CAPISTRANO had a distinct streak of masochism. PAPPAS had hollow cheeks, sad eyes, and a drooping mustache. He was about forty, as was MELAMED. CAPISTRANO looked a little younger.

I'm Greek on my mother's side; six of my nine colleagues were also Greek. It made sense. The others were HERSCHEL, KOLETTIS, PLASTIRAS, ME-

TAXAS and GOMPERS. "Gompers?" I said. PROTOPOPOLOS replied, "His grandmother was pure Hellene." The five of them were at that moment scattered over ten centuries.

I went out the first time with CAPISTRANO.

The first night, while our tourists were asleep, he told me something about himself. (But not about the Turkish great-grandmother; that was months later.) At the time he struck me as a wonderful mixture of the desperate, tragic romantic and the self-dramatizing charlatan. "I have made a little hobby of tracing my ancestors, do you know?" he told me. "It is my own private research. Here—look at these names." He produced a small, thick notebook. "In each era I visit," he said, "I seek out my ancestors and list them here. Already I know several hundred of them, going back to the fourteenth century."

"An interesting hobby," I said.

CAPISTRANO's eyes blazed. "More than a hobby! A matter of death and life! Look, my friend, whenever I grow more tired than usual of existence, all I must do is find one of these people, one, and destroy him! Take his life when he is still a child, perhaps. Then return to now-time. And at that moment, swiftly, without pain, my own tiresome life ceases ever to have been!"

"But the Time Patrol—"

"Helpless," said CAPISTRANO. "What can the Patrol do? If my crime is discovered, I am seized and erased from history for timecrime, right? If my crime is not discovered, and why should it be, then I have erased myself. Either way I am gone. Is this not the most charming way of suicide?"

My second time-tour of Byzantium was with THEMISTOKLIS METAXAS. From the moment I met him, I sensed

that this man was going to play a major role in my destiny, and I was right.

METAXAS was bantam-sized, maybe 1.5 meters tall. His skull was triangular, flat on top and pointed at the chin. His hair, thick and curly, was going gray. I guess he was about fifty years old. He had small glossy dark eyes, heavy brows, and a big sharp slab of nose. There was no fat on him anywhere. He was unusually strong. His voice was low and compelling.

METAXAS had charisma. Or maybe chutzpah.

He had been one of the first Time Couriers ever hired, more than fifteen years ago. If he had cared to have the job, he could have been the head of the entire Courier Service by now, with a platoon of wanton secretaries and no need to battle fleas in old Byzantium. By choice, though, METAXAS remained a Courier on active duty, doing nothing but the Byzantium run. He practically regarded himself as a Byzantine citizen, and even spent his layoffs there, in a villa he'd acquired in the suburbs of the early twelfth century.

He was engaged on the side in a variety of small and large illegalities; the Time Patrol seemed terrified of him and let him have his own way in everything. Of course, METAXAS had more sense than to meddle with the past in any way which might cause serious changes in now-time, but aside from that his plunderings up the line were totally uninhibited.

When I met him for the first time he said to me, "You haven't lived until you've laid one of your own ancestors."

The tour opened my eyes. We saw everything. I understood why METAXAS was the most coveted of Couriers. CAPISTRANO had done his best to give his people an exciting show, but

he had wasted too much time in the early phases. METAXAS, leaping brilliantly over hours and days, unveiled the entire catastrophe for us, and brought us at last to the morning when order was restored and a shaken Justinian rode through the charred ruins of Constantinople.

I was lost in admiration for the sharp-faced little man. He had revealed to me in a stunning way the difference between an inspired Courier and a merely competent one. METAXAS hadn't just taken us to the standard highlights. He had shown us any number of minor events, splicing us in for an hour here, two hours there, creating for us a glorious mosaic of Byzantine history. Other Couriers made a dozen stops, perhaps; METAXAS made more than fifty.

But he had his quirks. Like the moody CAPISTRANO, he'd devoted much effort to hunting out his ancestors. His motives were altogether different, however. CAPISTRANO was plotting an elaborate suicide, but METAXAS was obsessed with transtemporal incest. He explained it to me, once: "My father was a cold, hateful man. He beat his children every morning before breakfast for exercise. His father was a cold, hateful man. He forced his children to live like slaves. His father—I come from a long line of tyrannical authoritarian dictatorial males. I despise them all. It is my form of rebellion against the father-image. I go on and on through the past, seducing the wives and sisters and daughters of these men whom I loathe. Thus I puncture their icy smugness."

In some ways the man shocked me, but he transformed my life. I learned arrogance from METAXAS.

Up till now I had been a modest and self-effacing young man, and especially in the Time Service I had been unpushy

and callow. I acted this way because I was young and had a lot to learn, not only about myself, which is true of everyone, but also about the workings of the Time Service. So far I had met a lot of men who were older, smarter, slicker, and more corrupt than myself, and I had treated them with deference. But now I was with METAXAS, who was the oldest, smartest, clickest, and most corrupt of them all, and he imparted momentum to me, so that I stopped orbiting other men and took up a trajectory of my own.

Later I found out that this is one of METAXAS' functions in the Time Service. He takes moist-eyed young Couriers-in-training and fills them full of the swagger they need to be successful operators in their own right.

When I got back from my tour with METAXAS I no longer feared my first solo as a Courier. I was ready to go. METAXAS had showed me how a Courier can be a kind of artist, assembling a portrait of the past for his clients, and that was what I wanted to be. The risks and responsibilities didn't trouble me now.

XXXIII

I don't think I was quite the equal of Metaxas as a Courier, but I gave my people a respectable view of Byzantium. I did a damned good job, especially for a first try.

We shunted through all the highlights and some of the lowlights. I showed them the smashing of the icons under Leo III; the invasion by the Bulgars in 813; the trees of gilded bronze in the Magnaura Hall of Theophilus; the debaucheries of Michael the Drunkard; the arrival of the First Crusade in 1096 and 1097; the much more disastrous arrival of the Fourth Crusade in 1204; the re-

conquest of Constantinople by the Byzantines in 1261, and the coronation of Michael VIII; in short, all that counted.

My people loved it. Like most tourists, they particularly loved the riots, insurrections, rebellions, sieges, massacres, invasions, and fires.

"When do you show us the Turks come bustin' in?" the Ohio real-estate man kept asking. "I want to see those god-dam Turks wreck the place!"

"We're moving toward it," I told him.

First I gave them a look at Byzantium in the sunset years, under the dynasty of the Palaeologi. "Most of the empire is gone," I said, as we dropped down the line into 1275. "The Byzantines think and build on a small scale now. Intimacy is the key word. This is the little church of St. Mary of the Mongols, built for a bastard daughter of Michael VIII who for a short while was married to a Mongol khan. See the charm? The simplicity?"

We glided on down the line to 1330 to look in on the church of Our Savior in Chora. The tourists had already seen it down the line in Istanbul under its Turkish name, Kariye Camii; now they saw it in its pre-mosquified condition, with all its stunning mosaics intact and new. "See, there," I said. "There's the Mary who married the Mongol. She's still there down the line. And this—the early life and miracles of Christ—that one's gone from our time, but you can see how superb it was here."

The Sicilian shrink holographed the whole church; he was carrying a palm-camera that the Time Service regards as permissible, since nobody up the line is likely to notice it or comprehend its function. His bowlegged tempie waddled around ooing at everything. The Ohio people looked bored, as I knew they would. No matter. I'd give them culture

if I had to shove it up them.

"When do we see the Turks?" the Ohioans asked restlessly.

We skipped lithely over the Black Death years of 1347 and 1348. "I can't take you there," I said, when the protests came. "You've got to sign up for a special plague tour if you want to see any of the great epidemics."

Mr. Ohio's son-in-law grumbled, "We've had all our vaccinations."

"But five billion people down the line in now-time are unprotected," I explained. "You might pick up some contamination and bring it back with you, and start a worldwide epidemic. And then we'd have to edit your whole time-trip out of the flow of history to keep the disaster from happening. You wouldn't want that, would you?"

Bafflement.

"Look, I'd take you there if I could," I said. "But I can't. It's the law. Nobody can enter a plague era except under special supervision, which I'm not licensed to give."

I brought them down in 1385 and showed them the withering of Constantinople, a shrunken population within the great walls, whole districts deserted, churches falling into ruins. The Turks were devouring the surrounding countryside. I took my people up on the walls back of the Blachernae quarter and showed them the horsemen of the Turkish sultan prowling in the countryside beyond the city limits. My Ohio friend shook his fist at them. "Barbarian bastards!" he cried. "Scum of the earth!"

Down the line to 1398 we came. I showed them Anadolu Hisari, Sultan Beyazit's fortress on the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus. A summer haze made it a trifle hard to see, so we shunted a few months into autumn and looked again. Surreptitiously we passed around a little

pair of field glasses. Two elderly Byzantine monks appeared, saw the field glasses before I could get hold of them and hide them, and wanted to know what we were looking through.

"It helps the eyes," I said, and we got out of there fast.

In the summer of 1422 we watched Sultan Murat II's army bashing at the city walls. About 20,000 Turks had burned the villages and fields around Constantinople, massacred the inhabitants, uprooted the vines and olive trees, and now we saw them trying to get into the city. They moved siege machines up to the walls, went to work with battering rams, giant catapults, all the heavy artillery of the time. I got my people right up close to the battle line to see the fun.

The standard technique for doing this is to masquerade as holy pilgrims. Pilgrims can go anywhere, even into the front lines. I distributed crosses and icons, taught everybody how to look devout, and led them forward, chanting and intoning. There was no hope of getting them to chant genuine Byzantine hymns, of course, and so I told them to chant anything they liked, just making sure it sounded somber and pious. The Ohio people did *The Star-Spangled Banner* over and over, and the shrink and his friend sang arias from Verdi and Puccini. The Byzantine defenders paused in their work to wave to us. We waved back and made the sign of the Cross.

"What if we get killed?" asked the son-in-law.

"No chance of it. Not permanently, anyway. If a stray shot gets you, I'll summon the Time Patrol, and they'll pull you out of here five minutes ago."

The son-in-law looked puzzled.

"*Celeste Aida, forma divina* —"

"—so proudly we hailed —"

The Byzantines fought like hell to

keep the Turks out. They dumped Greek fire and boiling oil on them, hacked off every head that peered over the wall, withstood the fury of the artillery. Nevertheless it seemed certain that the city would fall by sunset. The evening shadows gathered.

"Watch this," I said.

Flames burst forth at several points along the wall. The Turks were burning their own siege machines and pulling back!

"Why?" I was asked. "Another hour and they'll have the city."

"Byzantine historians," I said, "later wrote that a miracle had taken place. The Virgin Mary had appeared, clad in a violet mantle, dazzlingly bright, and had walked along the walls. The Turks, in terror, withdrew."

"Where?" the son-in-law demanded. "I didn't see any miracle! I didn't see any Virgin Mary!"

"Maybe we ought to go back half an hour and look again," said his wife vaguely.

I explained that the Virgin Mary had not in fact been seen on the battlements, but that rather messengers had brought word to Sultan Murad of an uprising against him in Asia Minor, and, fearing he might be cut off and besieged in Constantinople if he succeeded in taking it, the sultan had halted operations at once to deal with the rebels in the east. The Ohioans looked disappointed. I think they genuinely had wanted to see the Virgin Mary. "We saw her on last year's trip," the son-in-law muttered.

"That was different," said his wife. "That was the *real* one, not a miracle!"

I adjusted timers and we shunted down the line.

Dawn, April 5, 1453. We waited for sunrise on the rampart of Byzantium.

"The city is isolated now," I said. "Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror has built the fortress of Rumeli Hisari up along the European side of the Bosphorus. The Turks are moving in. Come, look, listen to this."

Sunrise broke. We peered over the top of the wall. A deafening shout went up. "Across the Golden Horn are the tents of the Turks—200,000 of them. In the Bosphorus are 493 Turkish ships. There are 8000 Byzantine defenders, 15 ships. No help has come from Christian Europe for Christian Byzantium, except 700 Genoese soldiers and sailors under the command of Giovanni Giustiniani." I lingered on the name of Byzantium's last bulwark, stressing the rich echoes of the past: "Giustiniani . . . Justinian . . ." No one noticed. "Byzantium is to be thrown to the wolves," I went on. "Listen to the Turks roar!"

The famous Byzantine chain-boom was stretched across the Golden Horn and anchored at each bank: great rounded logs joined by iron hooks, designed to close the harbor to invaders. It had failed once before, in 1204; now it was stronger.

We jumped down the line to April 9 and watched the Turks creep closer to the walls. We skipped to April 12 and saw the great Turkish cannon, the Royal One, go into action. A turncoat Christian named Urban of Hungary had built it for the Turks; 100 pair of oxen had dragged it to the city; its barrel, three feet across, fired 1500-pound granite projectiles. We saw a burst of flame, a puff of smoke, and then a monstrous ball of stone rise sleepily, slowly, and slam with earthshaking force against the wall, sending up a cloud of dust. The thud jarred the whole city; the explosion lingered in our ears. "They can fire the Royal One only seven times a day," I

said. "It takes a while to load it. And now see this." We shunted forward by a week. The invaders were clustered about the giant cannon, readying it to fire. They touched it off; it exploded with a frightful blare of flame, sending huge chunks of its barrel slewing through the Turks. Bodies lay everywhere. The Byzantines cheered from the walls. "Among the dead," I said, "is Urban of Hungary. But soon the Turks will build a new cannon."

That evening the Turks rushed the walls, and we watched, singing *America the Beautiful* and arias from *Otello*, as the brave Genoese of Giovanni Giustiniani drove them off. Arrows whistled overhead; a few of the Byzantines fired clumsy, inaccurate rifles.

I did the final siege so brilliantly that I wept at my own virtuosity. I gave my people naval battles, hand-to-hand encounters at the walls, ceremonies of prayer in Haghia Sophia. I showed them the Turks slyly hauling their ships overland on wooden rollers from the Bosphorus to the Golden Horn, in order to get around the famous chain-boom, and I showed them the terror of the Byzantines when dawn on April 23 revealed 72 Turkish warships at anchor inside the harbor, and I showed them the gallant defeat of those ships by the Genoese.

We skipped forward through the days of the siege, watching the walls diminishing but remaining unbreached, watching the fortitude of the defenders grow and the determination of the attackers lessen. On May 28 we went by night to Haghia Sophia, to attend the last Christian service ever to be held there. It seemed that all the city was in the cathedral: Emperor Constantine XI and his court, beggars and thieves, merchants, pimps, Roman Catholics from Genoa and Venice, soldiers and sailors, dukes and prelates, and

also a good many disguised visitors from the future, more, perhaps, than all the rest combined. We listened to the bells tolling, and to the melancholy *Kyrie*, and we dropped to our knees, and many, even some of the time-travelers, wept for Byzantium, and when the service ended the lights were dimmed, veiling the glittering mosaics and frescoes.

And then it was May 29, and we saw a world on its last day.

At two in the morning the Turks rushed St. Romanus Gate. Giustiniani was wounded; the fighting was terrible, and I had to keep my people back from it; the rhythmic "Allah! Allah!" grew until it filled the universe with noise, and the defenders panicked and fled, and the Turks burst into the city.

"All is over," I said. "Emperor Constantine perishes in battle. Thousands flee the city; thousands take refuge behind the barred doors of Haghia Sophia. Look now: the pillaging, the slaughter!" We jumped frantically, vanishing and reappearing, so that we would not be run down by the horsemen galloping joyously through the streets. Probably we startled a good many Turks, but in all that frenzy the miraculous vanishing of a few pilgrims would attract no excitement. For a climax I swept them into May 30 and we watched Sultan Mehmet ride in triumph into Byzantium, flanked by viziers and pashas and janissaries.

"He halts outside Haghia Sophia," I whispered. "He scoops up dirt, drops it on his turban; it is his act of contrition before Allah, who has given him such a glorious victory. Now he goes in. It would not be safe for us to follow him there. Inside he finds a Turk hacking up the mosaic floor, which he regards as impious; the sultan will strike the man and forbid him to harm the cathedral, and then he will go to the altar and

climb upon it and make his salaam. Haghia Sophia becomes Ayasofya, the mosque. There is no more Byzantium. Come. Now we go down the line."

Dazed by what they had seen, my six tourists let me adjust their timers. I sounded the note on my pitchpipe, and down the line we went to 2059.

In the Time Service office afterward the Ohio real-estate man approached me. He stuck out his thumb in the vulgar way that vulgar people do, when they're offering a tip. "Son," he said, "I just want to tell you, that was one hell of a job you did! Come on over with me and let me stick this thumb on the input plate and give you a little bit of appreciation, okay?"

"I'm sorry," I said. "We're not permitted to accept gratuities."

"Crap on that, son. Suppose you don't pay any attention, and I just get some stash thumbed into your account, okay? Let's say you don't know a thing about it."

"I can't prevent a transfer of funds that I don't know about," I said.

"Good deal. By damn, when those Turks came into the city, what a show! What a show!"

When I got next month's account statement I found he had thumbed a cool thousand into my credit. I didn't report myself to my superiors. I figured I had earned it, rules or not.

XXXIV

I figured I had also earned the right to spend my layoff at Metaxas' villa in 1105. No longer a pest, a driveling apprentice, I was a full member of the brotherhood of Time Couriers. And one of the best in the business, in my opinion. I didn't have to fear that I'd be unwelcome at Metaxas' place.

Checking the assignment board, I found that Metaxas, like myself, had just finished a tour. That meant he'd be at his villa. I picked up a fresh outfit of Byzantine clothes, requisitioned a pouch of gold bezants, and got ready to jump to 1105.

Then I remembered the Paradox of Discontinuity.

I didn't know when in 1105 I was supposed to arrive. And I had to allow for Metaxas' now-time basis up there. In now-time for me it was currently November, 2059. Metaxas had just jumped up the line to some point in 1105 that corresponded, for him, to November of 2059. Suppose that point was in July, 1105. If, not knowing that, I shunted back to—say—March, 1105, the Metaxas I'd find wouldn't know me at all. I'd be just some uninvited snot barging in on the party. If I jumped to—say—June, 1105, I'd be the young newcomer, not yet a proven quantity, whom Metaxas had just taken out on a training trip. And if I jumped to—say—October, 1105, I'd meet a Metaxas who was three months ahead of me on a now-time basis, and who therefore knew details of my own future. That would be the Paradox of Discontinuity in the other direction, and I wasn't eager to experience it; it's dangerous and a little frightening to run into someone who has lived through a period that you haven't reached yet, and no Time Serviceman enjoys it.

I needed help.

I went to Spiros Protopopolos and said, "Metaxas invited me to visit him during my layoff, but I don't know where he is."

Cautiously Protopopolos said, "Why do you think I know? He doesn't confide in me."

"I thought he might have left some

record with you of his now-time basis."

"What the hell are you talking about?"

I wondered if I had made some hideous blunder. Bulling ahead, I winked and said, "You know where Metaxas is now. And maybe you know when, too. Come on, Proto. I'm in on the story. You don't need to be cagy with me."

He went into the next room and consulted Plastiras and Herschel. They must have vouched for me. Protopopolos, returning, whispered in my ear, "August 17, 1105. Say hello for me."

I thanked him and got on my way.

Metaxas lived in the suburbs, outside the walls of Constantinople. Land was cheap out there in the early twelfth century, thanks to such disturbances as the invasion of the marauding Patzinak barbarians in 1090 and the arrival of the disorderly rabble of Crusaders six years later. The settlers outside the walls had suffered badly then. Many fine estates had gone on the market. Metaxas had bought in 1095, when the landowners were still in shock over their injuries at the hands of the Patzinaks and were starting to worry about the next set of invaders.

He had one advantage denied to the sellers: he had already looked down the line and seen how stable things would be in the years just ahead, under Alexius I Comnenus. He knew that the countryside in which his villa was set would be spared from harm all during the twelfth century.

I crossed into Old Istanbul and cabbed out to the ruins of the city wall, and beyond it for about five kilometers. Naturally, this wasn't any suburban countryside in now-time, but just a gray sprawling extension of the modern city.

When I figured I was the proper distance out of town, I thumbed the plate and dismissed my cab. Then I took up a

position on the sidewalk, checking things out for my jump. Some kids saw me in my Byzantine costume and came over to watch, knowing that I must be going to go back in time. They called gaily to me in Turkish, maybe asking me to take them along.

One angelically grimy little boy said in recognizable French, "I hope they cut your head off."

Children are so sweetly frank, aren't they? And so charmingly hostile, in all eras.

I set my timer, gestured obscenely at my well-wisher, and went up the line.

The gray buildings vanished. The November bleakness gave way to the sunny glow of August. The air I breathed was suddenly fresh and fragrant. I stood beside a broad cobbled road running between two green meadows. A modest chariot drawn by two horses came clomping up and halted before me.

A lean young man in simple country clothes leaned out and said, "Sir, Metaxas has sent me to fetch you to him."

"But—he wasn't expecting—"

I shut up fast, before I said something out of line. Obviously Metaxas was expecting me. Had I hit the Paradox of Discontinuity, somehow?

Shrugging, I climbed up into the chariot.

As we rode into the west my driver nodded to the acres of grapevines to the left of the road and the groves of figtrees to the right. "All this," he said proudly, "belongs to Metaxas. Have you ever been here before?"

"No, never," I said.

"He is a great man, my master. He is a friend to the poor and an ally to the mighty. Everyone respects him. Emperor Alexius himself was here last month."

I felt queasy about that. Bad enough that Metaxas had carved out a now-time

identity for himself ten centuries up the line; what would the Time Patrol say about his hobnobbing with emperors? Giving advice, no doubt; altering the future by his foreknowledge of events; cementing himself into the historical matrix of this era as a valued adviser to royalty! Could anyone match him for gall?

Figs and grapes gave way to fields of wheat. "This, too, belongs to Metaxas," said the driver.

I had pictured Metaxas living in some comfortable little villa on a hectare or two of land, with a garden in front and perhaps a vegetable plot in the rear. I hadn't realized that he was a major landowner on such a scale.

We passed grazing cattle, and a mill worked by plodding oxen, and a pond no doubt well stocked with fish, and then we came to a double row of cypress trees that guarded a side road branching from the main highway, and took that road, and a splendid villa appeared, and at its entrance waited Metaxas, garbed in raiment suitable for the companion of an emperor.

"Jud!" he cried, and we embraced. "My friend! My brother! Jud, they tell me about the tour you led! Magnificent! Your tourists, they never stopped praising you!"

"Who told you?"

"Kolettis and Pappas. They're here. Come in, come in, come in! Wine for my guest! A change of robes for him! Come in, Jud, come in!"

XXXV

The villa was classical in style, atrium-and-peristyle, with a huge central courtyard, colonaded walkways, mosaic floors, frescoed walls, a great apsed reception room, a pond in the courtyard, a library

bulging with scrolls, a dining room whose round gold-inlaid ivory table could have seated three dozen, a statuary hall, and a marble bathroom. Metaxas' slaves hustled me toward the bathroom, and Metaxas called out that he'd see me later. I got the royal treatment.

Three dark-haired slave wenches—Persians, Metaxas said later—ministered to me in the bath. All they wore were loinstrings, and in a moment I was wearing less than that, for in a giggling jiggle of breasts they stripped me and went to work buffing and soaping me until I gleamed. Steam bath, hot bath, cold bath—my pores got the full work-out. When I emerged they dried me *most* detailedly and robed me in the most elegant tunic I ever expected to wear. Then they vanished, with a saucy wigwag of bare bottoms as they disappeared through some subterranean passageway. A middle-aged butler appeared and conveyed me to the atrium, where Metaxas awaited me with beakers of wine.

"You like it?" he asked.

"I feel like I'm in a dream."

"You are. And I'm the dreamer. You saw the farms? Wheat, olives, cattle, figs, everything. I own. My tenants farm. Each year I acquire new land on the profits of last year's work."

"It's incredible," I said. "And what's even more incredible is that you get away with it."

"I have earned my invulnerability," said Metaxas simply. "The Time Patrol knows I must not be persecuted."

"They realize you're here?"

"I believe they do," he said. "They stay away, though. I take care to make no significant changes in the fabric of history. I'm no villain. I'm merely self-indulgent."

"But you *are* changing history just by

being here! Some other landowner must have held these lands in the real 1105."

"This is the real 1105."

"I mean the original, before Benchley Effect visitors began coming here. You've interpolated yourself into the landowner rolls, and—my god, the chariot driver spoke of you as Metaxas! Is that the name you use here?"

"Themistoklis Metaxas. Why not? It is a good Greek name."

"Yes, but—look, it must be in all the documents, the tax records, everything! You've certainly changed the Byzantine archives that have come down to us, putting yourself in where you weren't in before. What—"

"There is no danger," Metaxas said. "So long as I take no life and create no life here, so long as I cause no one to change a previously decided course of action, all is well. You know, making a real alteration in the time-flow is a difficult thing. You have to do something big, like killing a monarch. Simply being here, I introduce tiny changes, but they are damped out by ten centuries of time, and no real change results down the line. Do you follow?"

I shrugged. "Just tell me one thing, at least. How did you know I was coming?"

Laughing, he said, "I looked two days down the line, and you were here. Therefore I checked for your time of arrival and arranged to have Nicholas meet you. It saved you a long walk, yes?"

Of course. I just hadn't been thinking four-dimensionally. It stood to reason that Metaxas would habitually scan his immediate future here, so he'd never be the victim of some unpleasant surprise in this sometimes unpredictable era.

"Come," Metaxas said. "Join the others."

They were lounging on divans by the

courtyard pool, nibbling bits of roasted meat that slavegirls in diaphanous robes popped into their mouths. Two of my fellow Couriers were there, Kolettis and Pappas, both enjoying layoffs. A third man, whom I didn't know, was peering at the fish in the pool. Though dressed in twelfth-century robes, he had a face that was instantly recognizable as modern, I thought. And I was right.

"This is Scholar Magistrate Paul Speer," said Metaxas to me in English. "A visiting academic. Meet Time Courier Jud Elliott, Dr. Speer."

We touched hands formally. Speer was about fifty, somewhat desiccated, a pale little man with an angular face and quick, nervous eyes. "Pleased," he said.

"And this," said Metaxas, "is Eudocia."

I had noticed her the instant I entered the courtyard, of course. She was a slim, auburn-haired girl, fair-skinned but with dark eyes, nineteen or twenty years old. She was heavily laden with jewelry, and so obviously was not just one of the slave-girls; yet her costume was daring by Byzantine standards, consisting only of a light double winding of translucent silk. As the fabric pulled taut against her it displayed small high breasts, boyish buttocks, a shallow navel. I prefer my women dark of hair and complexion and voluptuous of figure, but even so this Eudocia was enormously attractive to me. She seemed tense, coiled, full of pent-up fury and fervor.

She studied me in cool boldness. Her eyes sparkled wantonly.

In English Metaxas said to me, "I've told you of her. She's my great-great-multi-great-grandmother. Try her in your bed tonight, eh?"

Eudocia smiled more warmly. She didn't know what Metaxas was saying, but she must have known he was talking

about her. I tried not to stare too intently at the exposed beauties of the fair Eudocia. Is a man supposed to ogle his host's great-great-multi-great-grandmother?

A bare and beautiful slave offered me lamb and olives en brochette. I swallowed without tasting. My nostrils were filled with the perfume of Eudocia.

Metaxas gave me wine and led me away from her. "Dr. Speer," he said, "is here on a collecting trip. He's a student of classical Greek drama, in search of lost plays."

Dr. Speer clicked his heels. He was the sort of Teutonic person who, you automatically know, would use his full academic title on all occasions. *Achtung! Herr Scholar Magistrate Speer!* Scholar Magistrate Speer said, "It has been most successful for me so far. Of course, my search is just beginning, yet already from Byzantine libraries I have obtained the *Nausicaa* and *Peliades*, the *Phaethon*, and the *Oedipus*, and also of Aeschylus a nearly complete manuscript of *The Women of Aetna*. So you see I have done well." He clicked heels again.

I knew better than to remind him that the Time Patrol frowned on the recovery of lost masterpieces. Here in Metaxas' villa we were all ipso facto breakers of Patrol regulations, and accessories before and after the fact to any number of timecrimes.

I said, "Do you plan to bring these manuscripts down to now-time—"

"Yes, of course."

"But you can't publish them! What will you do with them?"

"Study them," said Scholar Magistrate Speer. "Increase the depth of my understanding of the Greek drama. And in time I will plant each manuscript in some place where archaeologists are likely to discover it, and so these plays

will be restored to the world. It is a minor crime, is it not? Can I be called evil for wishing to enlarge our scanty stock of Sophocles?"

It seemed quite all right to me.

To me it has always seemed like numbnoggins uptightness to have made it illegal to go up the line to discover lost manuscripts or paintings. I can see where it wouldn't be desirable to let somebody go back to 1600 and make off with Michelangelo's *Pieta* or Leonardo's *Leda*. That would be timechange and timecrime, since the *Pieta* and the *Leda* must make their way year by year toward our now-time, and not leapfrog over four and a half centuries. But why not allow us to obtain works of art that we don't already have? Who's injured by it?

Kolettis said, "Doc Speer, you're absolutely right! Hell, they let historians inspect the past to make corrections in the historical record, don't they? And when they bring out their revisionist books, it goddam well alters the state of knowledge!"

"Yes," said Pappas. "As for example when it was noticed that Lady Macbeth was in fact a tender woman who struggled in vain to limit the insane ambitions of her bloodthirsty husband. Or we could consider the case of the Moses story. Or what we know now about Richard III. Or the truth about Joan of Arc. We've patched up standard history in a million places since Benchley Effect travel began, and—"

"—and so why not patch up some of the holes in literary history?" Kolettis asked. "Here's to Doc Speer! Steal every goddam play there is, Doc!"

"The risks are great," said Speer. "If I am caught I will be severely punished, perhaps stripped of my academic standing." He said it as though he'd

prefer to be parted from his genitals. "The law is so foolish—they are such frightened men, these Time Patrol, worried about changes even that are virtuous."

To the Time Patrol no change is virtuous. They accept historical revisions because they can't help themselves: the enabling legislation specifically permits that kind of research. But the same law prohibits the transportation of any tangible object from up the line, except as required for the functions of the Time Service itself, and the Patrol sticks to the letter of it.

I said, "If you're looking for Greek plays, why don't you check out the Alexandria Library? You're bound to find a dozen there for every one that's survived into the Byzantine period."

Scholar Magistrate Speer gave me the smile one gives to clever but naive children.

"The Library of Alexandria," he explained ponderously, "is of course a prime target for scholars such as myself. Therefore it is guarded perpetually by a man of the Time Patrol in the guise of a scribe. He makes several arrests a month, I hear. I take no risk such as that. Here in Byzantium my goal is more hard but my exposure is not so much. I will look more. I still hope to find some ninety plays of Sophocles, and at least so many of Aeschylus, and—"

XXXVI

Dinner that night was a gaudy feast. We gorged on soups, stews, grilled duck, fish, pork, lamb, asparagus, mushrooms, apples, figs, artichokes, hard-boiled eggs served in blue enamel egg cups, cheese, salads, and wine. Out of courtesy to Eudocia, who was at table with us, we

conversed in Greek and therefore spoke not at all of time-travel or the iniquities of the Time Patrol.

After dinner, while dwarf jesters performed, I called Metaxas aside. "I have something to show you," I said, and handed him the roll of vellum on which I had inscribed my genealogy. He glanced at it and frowned.

"What is it?"

"My ancestry. Back to the seventh century."

"When did you do all this?" he asked, laughing.

"On my last layoff." I told him of my visits to Grandfather Passalidis, to Gregory Markezinis, to the time of Nicephorus Ducas.

Metaxas studied the list more carefully.

"Ducas? What is this, Ducas?"

"That's me. I'm a Ducas. The scribe gave me the details right back to the seventh century."

"Impossible. Nobody knows who the Ducasses were that early! It's false!"

"Maybe that part is. But from 950 on, it's legitimate. Those are my people. I followed them right out of Byzantium into Albania and on to twentieth-century Greece."

"This is the truth?"

"I swear it!"

"You clever little bandit," Metaxas said fondly. "All in one layoff, you learned this. And a Ducas, no less! A Ducas!" He consulted the list again. "Nicephorus Ducas, son of Nicetas Ducas, son of . . . hmm . . . Leo Ducas! Pulcheria Botaniates!"

"What's wrong?"

"I know them," Metaxas cried. "They've been my guests here, and I've stayed with them. He's one of the richest men in Byzantium, do you know that? And his wife Pulcheria—such a beautiful girl

— " He gripped my arm fiercely. " You'd swear? These are your ancestors?"

— "I'm positive."

"Wonderful," Metaxas said. "Let me tell you about Pulcheria, now. She's—oh, seventeen years old. Leo married her when she was just a child; they do a lot of that here. She's got a waist like *this*, but breasts out to *here*, and a flat belly and eyes that turn you afire, and—"

I shook free of his grasp and jammed my face close to his.

— "Metaxas, have you—"

I couldn't say it.

— "slept with Pulcheria? No, no, I haven't. God's truth, Jud! I've got enough women here. But look, boy, here's *your* opportunity! I can help you to meet her. She's ripe for seduction. Young, childless, beautiful, bored, her husband so busy with business matters that he hardly notices her—and she's *your* own great-great-multi-great-grandmother besides!"

"That part is *your* cletchup, not mine," I reminded him. "For me it might be a reason to stay away from her, in fact."

"Don't be an idiot. I'll fix it all up for you in two, three days. An introduction to the Ducases, a night as a guest in their palace in town, a word to Pulcheria's lady-in-waiting—"

— "No," I said.

— "No?"

— "No. I don't want to get mixed up in any of this."

— "You're a hard man to make happy, Jud."

Giving me the highest degree of hospitality in his lexicon, Metaxas sent his ancestress Eudocia into my bedroom that night. Her lean, supple body was a trifle meager for me. But she was a tigress. She was all energy and all passion. It was dawn before she let me sleep.

And in my dreams I saw Metaxas escort me to the palace of the Ducases, and introduce me to my multi-great-grandfather Leo, who said serenely, "This is my wife Pulcheria," and in my dream it seemed to me that she was the loveliest woman I had ever seen.

XXXVII

I had my first troublesome moment as a Courier on my next tour. Because I was too proud to call in the Time Patrol for help, I got myself involved in the Paradox of Duplication and also caught a taste of the Paradox of Transit Displacement. But I think I came out of it looking pretty good.

I was escorting nine tourists through the arrival of the First Crusade in Byzantium when the mess happened.

"In 1095," I told my people, "Pope Urban II called for the liberation of the Holy Land from the Saracens. Very shortly the knights of Europe began to enroll in the Crusade. Among those who welcomed such a war of liberation was Emperor Alexius of Byzantium, who saw in it a way of regaining the territories in the Near East that Byzantium had lost to the Turks and the Arabs. Alexius sent word that he wouldn't mind getting a few hundred experienced knights to help him clean the infidels out. But he got a good deal more than that, as we'll see in a moment, down the line in 1096."

We shunted to August 1, 1096.

Ascending the walls of Constantinople, we peered out into the countryside and saw it full of troops: not mailed knights but a raggle-taggle band of tattered peasants.

"This," I said, "is the People's Crusade. While the professional soldiers were working out the logistics of their march, a scrawny, foul-smelling little charis-

matic named Peter the Hermit rounded up thousands of paupers and farmers and led them across Europe to Byzantium. They looted and pillaged along the way, cleaned out the harvest of half of Europe, and burned Belgrade in a dispute with the Byzantine administrators. But finally they got here, 30,000 of them."

"Which one is Peter the Hermit?" asked the most obstreperous member of the group, a full-blown, fortyish bachelor lady from Des Moines named Marge Hefferin.

I checked the time. "You'll see him in another minute and a half. Alexius has sent a couple of officials to invite Peter to court. He wants Peter and his rabble to wait in Constantinople until the knights and barons get here, since these people will get slaughtered by the Turks if they go over into Asia Minor without a military escort. Look: there's Peter now."

Two dandified Byzantine grandees emerged from the mob, obviously holding their breath and looking as though they'd like to hold their noses too. Between them marched a scruffy, barefoot, rag-clad, filthy, long-chinned, gnomish man with blazing eyes and a pock-marked face.

"Peter the Hermit," I said, "on his way to see the emperor."

We shunted forward three days. The People's Crusade was inside Constantinople and playing hell with Alexius' city. A good many buildings were aflame. Ten Crusaders were atop one of the churches, stripping the lead from its roof for resale. A highborn-looking Byzantine woman emerged from Hagia Sophia and was stripped bare and raped by a pack of Peter's pious pilgrims before our eyes.

I said, "Alexius has miscalculated by letting this riffraff into the city. Now

he's making arrangements to get them out the other side, by offering free ferry service across the Bosphorus to Asia. On August 6 they'll start on their way. The Crusaders will begin by massacring the Byzantine settlements in western Asia Minor; then they'll attack the Turks and be wiped out almost completely. If we had time, I'd take you down to 1097 and across to see the mountain of bones along the road. That's what happened to the People's Crusade. However, the pros are on their way, and let's watch them."

I explained about the four armies of Crusaders: the army of Raymond of Toulouse, the army of Duke Robert of Normandy, the army of Bohemond and Tancred, and the army of Godfrey of Bouillon, Eustace of Boulogne, and Baldwin of Lorraine. Some of my people had read up on their Crusader history and nodded in recognition of the names.

We shunted to the final week of 1096. "Alexius," I said, "has learned his lesson from the People's Crusade. He doesn't plan to let the real Crusaders linger long in Constantinople. They all have to pass through Byzantium on their way to the Holy Land, but he's going to hustle them through in a hurry, and he'll make their leaders swear allegiance to him before he admits them."

We watched the army of Godfrey of Bouillon pitch camp outside the walls of Constantinople. We observed the envoys going back and forth, Alexius requesting the oath of allegiance, Godfrey refusing. With careful editing I covered four months in less than an hour, showing how mistrust and enmity were building up between the Christian Crusaders and the Christian Byzantines who were supposed to collaborate in the liberation of the Holy Land. Godfrey still refused to swear allegiance; Alexius not

only kept the Crusaders sealed out of Constantinople, but now was blockading their camp, hoping to starve them into going away. Baldwin of Lorraine began to raid the suburbs; Godfrey captured a platoon of Byzantine soldiers and put them to death in view of the city walls. And on April 2 the Crusaders began to lay siege to the city.

"Observe how easily the Byzantines drive them off," I said. "Alexius, losing patience, has sent his best troops into battle. The Crusaders, not yet accustomed to fighting together, flee. On Easter Sunday Godfrey and Baldwin submit, and swear allegiance to Alexius. All now is well. The emperor will give a banquet for the Crusaders in Constantinople, and then swiftly will ship them across the Bosphorus. More Crusaders, he knows, will arrive in a few days—the army of Bohemond and Tancred."

Marge Hefferin emitted a little gasping squeak at the sound of those names. I should have been warned.

We skipped forward to April 10 for a look at the next batch of Crusaders. Thousands of soldiers again camped outside Constantinople. They strolled around arrogantly in chain mail and surcoats, and playfully swatted each other with swords or maces when things got dull.

"Which one is Bohemond?" asked Marge Hefferin.

I scanned the field. "There," I said. "Ooooh."

He was impressive. About two meters tall, a giant for his times, head and shoulders above everyone else around him. Broad shoulders, deep chest, close-cropped hair. Strangely white of skin. Swaggering posture. A grim customer, tough and savage.

He was cleverer than the other leaders, too. Instead of quarreling with Alex-

ius over the business of swearing allegiance, Bohemond gave in immediately. Oaths, to him, were only words, and it was foolish to waste time bickering with the Byzantines when there were empires to be won in Asia. So Bohemond got quick entry to Constantinople. I took my people to the gate where he'd be passing into the city, so they could have a close look at him. A mistake.

The Crusaders came striding grandly in on foot, six abreast.

When Bohemond appeared, Marge Hefferin broke from the group.

She rushed toward Bohemond, squealing, "Bohemond, Bohemond, I love you, I've always loved you, Bohemond! Take me! Make me your slave, beloved!" And words to that effect.

Bohemond turned and peered at her in bewilderment. I guess the sight of a hefty, shrieking, female running wildly in his direction must have puzzled him. But Marge didn't get within five meters of him.

A knight just in front of Bohemond, deciding that an assassination plot was unfolding, pulled out his dagger and jammed it right between Marge's big breasts. The impact halted her mad charge, and she staggered back, frowning. Blood burbled from her lips. As she toppled, another knight swung at her with a broadsword and just about cut her in half at the waist. Entrails went spilling all over the pavement.

The whole thing took about fifteen seconds. I had no chance to move. I stood appalled and aghast, realizing that my career as a Time Courier might just have come to an end. Losing a tourist is about the worst thing a Courier can do, short of committing timecrime itself.

I had to act quickly.

I said to my tourists, "Don't any of you move from the spot! That's an order!"

It wasn't likely that they'd disobey. They were huddled together in hysteria, sobbing and puking and shivering. The shock alone would hold them in place for a few minutes—more time than I'd need.

I set my timer for a two-minute jump up the line and shunted fast.

Instantly I found myself standing right behind myself. There I was, big ears and all, watching Bohemond saunter up the street. My tourists were standing on both sides of me. Marge Hefferin was breathing hard, rearing up on tiptoes for a better view of her idol.

I moved into position in back of her.

Just as she made the first movement toward the street, my hands shot out. I clamped my hands on her and hissed in her ear, "Stay where you are or you'll be sorriest."

She squirmed and twisted. I dug my fingertips deep into the meat of her quivering rump and hung on. She writhed around to see who her attacker was, saw it was me, and stared in amazement at the other me a few paces to her left. All the fight went out of her. She sagged, and I whispered another reminder for her to stay put, and then Bohemond was past us and well up the street.

I released her, set my timer, and shunted down the line by sixty seconds.

My net absence from my tourists had been less than a minute. I half expected to find them still gagging and retching over the bloody smiting of Marge Hefferin. But the editing had succeeded. There was no corpse in the street, now. No intestines were spilled beneath the boots of the marching Crusaders. Marge stood with the group, shaking her head in confusion and rubbing her backside.

Did any of them suspect what had happened? No. No. Not even a phantom memory. My tourists did not experience

the Paradox of Transit Displacement, for they had not made the jump within a jump that I had; and so I remembered what now was gone from their minds, I recalled clearly the bloody event that I had transformed into a nonevent.

"Down the line!" I yelled, and shunted them all into 1098.

The street was quiet. The Crusaders were long since gone, and at the moment were hung up in Syria at the siege of Antioch. It was dusk on a sticky summer day and there were no witnesses to our sudden arrival.

Marge was the only one who realized that something funny had gone on; the others had not seen anything unusual, but she clearly knew that an extra Jud Elliott had materialized behind her and prevented her from rushing out into the street.

"What in the hell do you think you were doing?" I asked her. "You were about to run out into the street and throw yourself at Bohemond, weren't you?"

"I couldn't help it. It was a sudden compulsion. I've always loved Bohemond, don't you see? He's been my hero, my god—I've read every word anyone's written about him—and then there he was, right in front of me—!"

"Let me tell you how events really unfolded," I said, and described the way she had been killed. Then I told her how I had edited the past, how I had pinched the episode of her death into a parallel line. I said, "I want you to know that the only reason I got you unkillable was to save my own job. It looks bad for a Courier if he can't keep control of his people. Otherwise I'd have been happy to leave you disembowled. Didn't I tell you a million times *never to break from cover?*"

I warned her to forget every shred of

my admission that I had changed events to save her life.

"The next time you disobey me in any way, though," I told her, "I'll—"

I was going to say that I'd ram her head up her tail and make a Moebius strip out of her. Then I realized that a Courier can't talk to a client that way, no matter what the provocation.

"—cancel your tour and send you down the line to now-time immediately, you hear me?"

"I won't ever try that again," she murmured. "I swear it. You know, now that you told me about it, I can almost feel it happening. That dagger going into me—"

"It never happened."

"It never happened," she said doubtfully.

"Put some conviction into it. *It never happened.*"

"*It never happened,*" she repeated. "But I can still feel it!"

XXXVIII

We all spent the night in an inn in 1098. Feeling tense and stale after so much delicate work, I decided to jump down to 1105, while my people slept, and drop in on Metaxas. I didn't even know if he'd be at his villa, but it was worth the try. I needed desperately to unwind.

I calibrated the timing with care.

Metaxas' last layoff had begun in early November, 2059, and he had jumped to mid-August, 1105. I figured he had spent ten or twelve days there. That schedule would have returned him to 2059 toward the end of November; and then, assuming he had taken out a group on a two-week tour, he'd have been able to get back to his villa by September 15 or so, 1105.

I played it safe and shunted down to September 20.

Now I had to find a way to get to his villa.

It is one of the oddities of the era of the Benchley Effect that I would find it easier to jump across seven years of time than to get myself a few dozen kilometers into the Byzantine countryside. But I did have that problem. I had no access to a chariot, and there aren't any cabs for hire in the twelfth century.

Walk? Ridiculous idea!

I contemplated heading for the nearest inn and dangling bezants in front of freelance charioteers until I found one willing to make the trip to Metaxas' place. As I considered this I heard a familiar voice yelling, "Herr Courier Elliott! Herr Courier Elliott!"

I turned. Scholar Magistrate Speer.

"Guten Tag, Herr Courier Elliott!" said Scholar Magistrate Speer.

"Guten—" I scowled, cut myself short, greeted him in a more Byzantine way. He smiled indulgently at my observance of the rules.

"I have a very successful visit been having," he said. "Since last I enjoyed with you company, have I found the *Thamyras* of Sophocles and also the *Melanippe* of Euripides, and further a partial text of what I believe is the *Archelaus* of Euripides. And then there is besides the text of a play that is claiming to be of Aeschylus the *Helios*, of which there is in the records no reference for. So perhaps is a forgery or otherwise is maybe a new discovery, I will see which only upon reading. Eh? A good visit, eh, Herr Courier!"

"Splendid," I said.

"And now I am returning to the villa of our friend Metaxas, just as soon as I complete a small purchase in this shop

of spices. Would you accompany me?"

"You have wheels?" I asked.

"Was meinen Sie mit 'wheels'?"

"Transportation. A chariot."

"Naturlich! Over there. It waits for me, a chariot mit driver, from Metaxas."

"Swell," I said. "Take care of your business in the spice shop and then we can ride out to Metaxas' place together, okay?"

The shop was dark and fragrant. In barrels, jugs, flasks, and baskets it displayed its wares: olives, nuts, dates, figs, raisins, pistachios, cheeses, and spices both ground and whole of many different sorts. Speer, apparently running some errand for Metaxas' chef, selected a few items and pulled forth a purse of bezants to pay for them. While this was going on an ornate chariot pulled up outside the shop and three figures dismounted and entered. One was a slave-girl—to carry the merchandise to the chariot, evidently. The second was a woman of mature years and simple dress—a duenna, I supposed, just the right kind of dragon to escort a Byzantine wife on a shopping expedition. The third person was the wife herself, obviously a woman of the very highest class making a tour of the town.

She was fantastically beautiful.

I knew at once that she was no more than seventeen. She had a supple, liquid Mediterranean beauty; her eyes were dark and large and glossy, with long lashes, and her skin was light olive in hue, and her lips were full and her nose aquiline, and her bearing was elegant and aristocratic. Her robes of white silk revealed the outlines of high, sumptuous breasts, curving flanks, voluptuous buttocks. She was all the women I had ever desired, united into one ideal form.

I stared at her without shame.

She stared back. Without shame.

Our eyes met and held, and a current of pure force passed between us, and I quivered as the full surge hit me. She smiled only on the left side of her mouth, quirking the lips in, revealing two glistening teeth. It was a smile of invitation, a smile of lust.

She nodded almost imperceptibly to me.

Then she turned away, and pointed to the bins, ordering this and this and this, and I continued to stare, until the duenna, noticing it, shot me a furious look of warning.

"Come," Speer said impatiently. "The chariot is waiting—"

"Let it wait a little longer."

I made him stay in the store with me until the three women had completed their transaction. I watched them leave, my eyes riveted to the subtle sway of my beloved's silk-sheathed body. Then I whirled and pounced on the proprietor of the shop, seizing his wrist and barking, "That woman! What's her name?"

"Milord, I—that is—"

I flipped a gold piece to the counter. "Her name!"

"That is Pulcheria Ducas," he gasped. "The wife of the well-known Leo Ducas, who—"

I groaned and rushed out of the store.

Pulcheria! Great-great-multi-great-grandmother!

Her chariot clattered off toward the Golden Horn.

Speer emerged. "Are you in good health, Herr Courier Elliott?"

"I'm sick as a pig," I muttered. "Pulcheria Ducas—that was Pulcheria Ducas—"

"And so?"

"I love her, Speer, can you understand that?"

Looking blankfaced, he said, "The chariot is ready."

"Never mind. I'm not going with you. Give Metaxas my best regards."

In anguish I ran down the street, aimlessly, my mind and my crotch inflamed with the vision of Pulcheria. I trembled. I streamed with sweat. I sobbed. Finally I came up against the wall of some church, and pressed my cheek to the cold stone, and touched my timer and shunted back to the tourists I had left sleeping in 1098.

XXXIX

I was a lousy Courier for the rest of that trip.

Moody, withdrawn, lovesick, confused, I shuttled my people through the standard events, the Venetian invasion of 1204 and the Turkish conquest of 1453, in a routine, mechanical way. Maybe they didn't realize they were getting a minimum job, or didn't care. Maybe they blamed it on the trouble Marge Hefferin had caused. For better or for worse I gave them their tour and delivered them safely down the line in now-time and was rid of them.

I was on layoff again, and my soul was infected by desire.

Go to 1105? Accept Metaxas' offer, let him introduce me to Pulcheria?

I recoiled at the idea.

Time Patrol rules specifically forbid any kind of fraternization between Couriers (or other time-travelers) and people who live up the line. The only contact we are supposed to have with the residents of the past is casual and incidental — buying a bag of olives, asking how to get to Hagia Sophia from here, like that. We are not permitted to strike up friendships, get into long philosophical discussions, or have sexual intercourse with inhabitants of previous eras.

Especially with our own ancestors.

The incest taboo per se didn't scare me much; like all taboos, it isn't worth a whole lot any more, and while I'd hesitate at bedding my sister or my mother, I couldn't see any very convincing reason to abstain from bedding Pulcheria. I felt a little lingering puritanism, maybe, but I knew it would fade in a minute if Pulcheria became available.

What held me back, though, was the universal deterrent, fear of retribution. If the Time Patrol caught me sexing around with my multi-great-grandmother, they'd certainly fire me from the Time Service, might imprison me, might even try to invoke the death penalty for first-degree timecrime on the grounds that I had tried to become my own ancestor. I was terrified of the possibilities.

How could they catch me?

Plenty of scenarios presented themselves. For example:

I wangle introduction to Pulcheria. Somehow get into situation of privacy with her. Reach for her fair flesh; she screams; family bodyguards seize me and put me to death. Time Patrol, when I don't check in after my layoff, traces me, finds out what has happened, rescues me, then brings charges of timecrime.

Or:

I wangle introduction, etc., and seduce Pulcheria. Just at supreme moment husband bursts into bedroom and impales me. Rest of scenario follows.

Or:

I fall so desperately in love with Pulcheria that I abscond with her to some distant point in time, say 400 B.C. or 1600 A.D., and we live happily ever after until Time Patrol catches us, returns her to proper moment of 1105, brings charges of timecrime against me.

Or—

A dozen other possibilities, all of them ending in the same melancholy way. So I resisted all temptations to spend my layoff in 1105 sniffing after Pulcheria. Instead, to suit the darkness of my mood in this time of unrequited lust, I signed up to do the Black Death tour.

Only the weirds, the freaks, the sickos, and the pervos would take a tour like that, which is to say the demand is always pretty heavy. But as a vacationing Courier I was able to bump a paying customer and get into the next group leaving.

There are four regular Black Death outings. One sets out from the Crimea for 1347 and shows you the plague as it spills out of Asia. The highlight of that tour is the siege of Kaffa, a Genoese trading port on the Black Sea, by Khan Janibeg of the Kipchak Mongols. Janibeg's men were rotten with plague, and he catapulted their corpses into the town to infect the Genoses. You have to book a reservation a year in advance for that one.

The Genoese carried the Black Death westward into the Mediterranean, and the second tour takes you to Italy, autumn of 1347, to watch it spread inland. You see a mass burning of Jews, who were thought to have caused the epidemic by poisoning the wells. The third tour brings you to France in 1348, and the fourth to England in the late spring of 1349.

The booking office got me on the England trip. I made a noon hop to London and joined the group two hours before it was about to leave. Our Courier was a tall, cadaverous man named Riley, with bushy eyebrows and bad teeth. He was a little strange, as you have to be to specialize in this particular tour. He welcomed me in friendly if moody fashion and got me fitted for a plague suit.

A plague suit is more or less a space-suit, done up in black trim. You carry a standard fourteen-day rebreathing unit, you eat via an intake pipe, and you eliminate wastes with difficulty and complexity. The idea, naturally, is to keep you totally sealed off from the infectious environment. Tourists are told that if they open their suits even for ten seconds, they'll be marooned permanently in the plague era; and although this is not true at all, there hasn't been a case yet of a tourist's calling the Time Service's bluff.

This is one of the few tours that operates to and from fixed points. We don't want returning groups materializing all over the place, carrying plague on their spacesuits, and so the Service has marked off jumping areas in red paint at the medieval end of each of the four plague tours. When your group is ready to come back, you go to a jumping area and shunt down the line from there. This materializes you within a sealed sterile dome; your suit is taken from you and you are thoroughly fumigated before you're allowed to rejoin the twenty-first century.

"What you are about to see," said Riley portentously, "is neither a reconstruction nor a simulation nor an approximation. It is the real thing, exaggerated in no way."

We shunted up the line.

XL

Clad in our black plastic suits, we marched single file through a land of the dead.

Nobody paid any attention to us. At such a time as this our costume didn't even seem outlandish. The black was logical; the airtight sealing of our suits was even more logical; and though the

fabric was a little on the anachronistic side for the fourteenth century, no one was curious. At this time wise men stayed indoors and kept their curiosities on tight leashes.

Those who saw us must have assumed that we were priests going on a pilgrimage of prayer. Our somber suits, our single-file array, the fearlessness with which we paraded through the worst areas of infestation, all marked us as God's men, or else Satan's, and, either way, who would dare to interfere with us?

Bells tolled a leaden dirge, donging all day and half the night. The world was a perpetual funeral. A grim haze hung over London; the sky was never anything but gray and ashen all the time we were there. Not that nature was reinforcing the dolefulness, that old pathetic fallacy; no, the haze was man-made, for thousands of small fires were burning in England, consuming the clothes and the homes and the bodies of the stricken.

We saw plague victims in all stages, from the early staggering to the later trembling and sweating and falling and convulsing. "The onset of the disease," said Riley calmly, dispassionately, "is marked by hardenings and swellings of the glands in the armpits and the groin. The swellings rapidly grow to the size of eggs or apples. See, this woman here—" She was young, haggard, terrorstricken. She clutched desperately at the sprouting buboes and lurched past us through the smoky streets.

"Next," he said, "come the black blotches, first on the arms and thighs, then all over the body. And the carbuncles which, when lanced, give no relief. And then delirium, insanity, death always on the third day after the swellings appear. Observe here—" A victim in

the late stages, groaning in the street, abandoned. "And here—" Pale faces looking down from a window. "Over here—" Heaped corpses at the door of a stable.

Houses were locked. Shops were barred. The only people in the streets were those already infected, roaming desperately about searching for a doctor, a priest, a miracleworker.

Fractured, tormented music came to us from the distance: pipes, drums, viols, lutes, sackbuts, shawms, clarions, krummhorns, all the medieval instruments at once, but giving forth not the pretty buzz and tootle of the middle ages, rather a harsh, discordant, keyless whine and screech. Riley looked pleased. "A procession of flagellants is coming!" he cried, elated. "'Follow me! By all means, let's not miss it!'"

And through the winding streets the flagellants came, men and women, naked to the waist, grimy, bloody, some playing on instruments, most wielding knotted whips, lashing, lashing, tirelessly bringing down the lash across bare backs, breasts, cheeks, arms, foreheads. They droned toneless hymns; they groaned in agony; they stumbled forward, a few of the whippers and some of the whipped already showing the buboes of the plague, and without looking at us they went by, down some dismal alley leading to a deserted church.

And we happy time-tourists picked our way over the dead and the dying and marched on, for our Courier wished us to drink this experience to the deepest.

We saw the bonfires bodies of the dead blackening and splitting open.

We saw other heaps of the unburied left in fields to rot.

We saw ghouls searching cadavers for items of value.

We saw priests on horseback fleeing

from parishioners begging for Heaven's mercy.

We entered an unguarded palace to watch terrified surgeons letting blood from some dying duke.

We saw another procession of strange black-clad beings cross our street at an angle, their faces hidden behind mirror-like plates, and we shivered at the grotesque sight of these nightmare marchers, these demons without faces, and we realized only slowly that we had intersected some other party of tourists.

Riley was ready with cool statistics. "The mortality rate of the Black Death," he announced, "was anywhere from one-eighth to two-thirds of the population in a given area. In Europe it is estimated that 25% of the entire population perished; worldwide, the mortality was about 33%. That is to say, a similar plague today would take the lives of more than two billion people."

We watched a woman emerge from a thatched house and, one by one, arrange the bodies of five children in the street so that they might be taken away by the department of sanitation.

Riley said, "The aristocracy was annihilated, causing great shifts in patterns of inheritance. There were permanent cultural effects as a result of the wholesale deaths of painters of a single school, of poets, of learned monks. The psychological impact was long-lasting; for generations it was thought that the mid-fourteenth century had done something to earn the wrath of God, and a return of His wrath was momentarily expected."

We formed the audience for a mass funeral at which two young and frightened priests muttered words over a hundred blotched and swollen corpses, tolled their little bells, sprinkled holy water, and signalled to the sextons to start the bonfire.

"Not until the early sixteenth century," said Riley, "will the population reach its pre-1348 level."

It was impossible for me to tell how others were affected by these horrors, since we all were hidden in our suits. Probably most of my companions were fascinated and thrilled. I'm told that it's customary for a dedicated plague aficionado to take all four Black Death tours in succession, starting in the Crimea; many have gone through the set five or six times. My own reaction was one of diminishing shock. You accommodate to monstrous horror. I think that by the tenth time through I'd have been as cool and dispassionate as Courier Riley, that brimming fount of statistics.

At the end of our journey through hell we made our way to Westminster. On the pavement outside the palace Time Service personnel had painted a red circle five meters in diameter. This was our jumping point. We gathered close in the middle. I helped Riley make the timer adjustments—on this tour, the timers are mounted on the outside of the suits. He gave the signal and we shunted.

A couple of plague victims, shambling past the palace, were witnesses to our departure. I doubt that it troubled them much. In a time when all the world is perishing, who can get excited over the sight of ten black demons vanishing—

XLI

We emerged under a shimmering dome, yielded up our polluted suits, and came forth purged and purified and ennobled by what we had seen. But images of Pulcheria still obsessed me. Restless, tormented, I fought with temptation.

Go back to 1105? Let Metaxas insinuate me into the Ducas household? Bed

Pulcheria and ease my yearnings?

No. No. No. No.

Fight temptation. Sublimate. Make an empress instead.

I hurried back to Istanbul and shunted up the line to 537. I went over to Hagia Sophia to look for Metaxas at the dedication ceremony.

Metaxas was there, in many parts of the throng. I spotted at least ten of him. (I also saw two Jud Elliotts, and I wasn't half trying.) On my first two approaches, though, I ran into the Paradox of Discontinuity; neither Metaxas knew me. One shook me off with a scowl of irritation, and the other simply said, "Whoever you are, we haven't met yet. Beat it." On the third try I found a Metaxas who recognized me, and we arranged to meet that evening at the inn where he was lodging his tour. He was staying down the line in 610 to show his people the coronation of Emperor Heraclius.

"Well?" he said. "What's your now-time basis, anyway?"

"Early December, 2059."

"I'm ahead of you," said Metaxas. "I'm out of the middle of February, 2060. We're discontinuous."

That scared me. This man knew two and a half months of my future. Etiquette required him to keep his knowledge to himself; it was quite possible that I would be/had been killed in January, 2060, and that this Metaxas knew all the details, but he couldn't drop a hint of that to this me. Still, the gap frightened me.

He saw it. "Do you want to go back and find a different one?" he asked.

"No. That's all right. I think we can manage."

His face was a frozen mask. He played by the rules; neither by inflection

nor expression was he going to react to anything I said in a way that might reveal my own future to me.

"What can I do for you?"

"You once said you'd help me get Empress Theodora."

"I remember that, yes."

"I turned you down then. Now I'd like to try her."

"No problem," said Metaxas. "Let's jump up to 646. Justinian will be preoccupied with building Hagia Sophia. Theodora's available."

"How easily?"

"Nothing to it," he said.

We shunted. On a cool spring day in 535 I went with Metaxas to the Great Palace, where he sought and found a plump, eunuchoid individual named Anastasius and had a long, animated discussion with him. Evidently Anastasius was chief procurer to the empress this year, and had the responsibility of finding her anywhere from one to ten young men a night. The conversation was carried on in low muttered tones, punctuated by angry outbursts, but from what I could hear of it I gathered that Anastasius was offering me an hour with Theodora, and that Metaxas was holding out for a whole night. I felt edgy about that. Virile I am, yes, but would I be able to entertain one of history's most celebrated nymphomaniacs from darkness to dawn? I signalled to Metaxas to accept something less grandiose, but he persisted, and in the end Anastasius agreed to let me have four hours with the empress.

I thanked Metaxas and he left, jumping down to his tour in 610.

Anastasius took charge of me. I was bathed, groomed, curried, required to swallow an oily, bitter potion that he claimed was an aphrodisiac. And an

hour before midnight I was ushered into the bedchambers of the Empress Theodora.

Cleopatra . . . Delilah . . . Harlow . . . Lucrezia Borgia . . . Theodora . . .

Had any of them ever existed? Was their legendary wantonness real? Could this truly be Judson Daniel Elliott III standing before the bed of the depraved Empress of Byzantium?

I knew the tales Procopius told of her. The orgies at dinners of state. The exhibitionist performances in the theater. The repeated illegitimate pregnancies and the annual abortions. The friends and lovers betrayed and tortured. If only one story out of ten were true, her vileness was unequalled.

She was pale, fair-skinned, big-breasted, narrow-waisted, and surprisingly short, the top of her head barely reaching my chest. Perfumes drenched her skin, yet unmistakable fleshy reeks came through. Her eyes were fierce, cold, hard, slightly hyperthyroid: nymphomaniacal eyes.

Her tastes were remarkably various, and in my four hours I satisfied most of them. It may not have been the kinkiest four hours I ever spent, but it had to come close. But yet her pyrotechnics chilled me. There was something mechanical and empty about the way Theodora presented now this, now that, now the other thing, for me to deal with. It was as if she were running through a script that she had played out a million times.

It was interesting in a strenuous way. But it wasn't overwhelming. I mean, I expected more, somehow, from being in bed with one of history's most famous sinners.

I went back down to Istanbul and reported for duty, and took a party of eight out on the two-week tour.

Neither the Black Death nor Theodora had burned away my passion for Pulcheria Ducas. I hoped now that I'd shake free of that dangerous obsession by getting back to work.

My tour group included the following people:

J. Frederick Gostaman of Biloxi, Mississippi, a retail dealer in pharmaceuticals and transplant organs, along with his wife, Louise, his sixteen-year-old daughter Palmyra, and his fourteen-year-old son Bilbo.

Conrad Sauerabend of St. Louis, Missouri, a stockbroker, traveling alone.

Miss Hester Pistil of Brooklyn, New York, a young schoolteacher.

Leopold Haggins of St. Petersburg, Florida, a retired manufacturer of power cores, and his wife Chrystal.

In short, the usual batch of overcapitalized and undereducated idlers. Sauerabend, who was fat and jowly and sullen, took an immediate dislike to Gostaman, who was fat and jowly and jovial, because Gostaman made a joking remark about the way Sauerabend was peering down the neckline of Gostaman's daughter at one of our orientation sessions. I think Gostaman was joking, anyway, but Sauerabend got red-faced and furious, and Palmyra, who though sixteen was underdeveloped enough to pass for a skinny thirteen, ran out of the room in tears. I patched things up, but Sauerabend continued to glare at Gostaman. Miss Pistil, the schoolteacher, who was a vacant-eyed blonde with an augmented bosom and an expression that managed to be both tense and languid at once,

established at our first meeting that she is the sort of girl who takes these trips to sleep with Couriers; even if I hadn't been preoccupied with Pulcheria, I don't think I'd have taken advantage of her availability, but as things stood I felt very little urge to explore Miss Pistil's charms. This was not the case with young Bilbo Gostaman, who was such a fashion-plate that he was wearing knickers with padded groin (if they can revive Cretan bodices, why not the codpiece?) and who got his hand under Miss Pistil's skirt during our second orientation session. He thought he was being surreptitious about it, but I saw him, and so did old man Gostaman, who beamed in paternal pride, and so did Mrs. Chrystal Haggins, who was shocked into catalepsy. Miss Pistil looked thrilled. Mr. Leopold Haggins, who was 85 and pretty leathery, meanwhile winked hopefully at Mrs. Louise Gostaman, a placid and matronly sort of woman who was destined to spend most of our tour fighting off the old scoundrel's quivering advances. You can see how it was.

Off we went for two happy weeks together.

I was, again, a second-rate Courier. I couldn't summon up the divine spark. I showed them everything I was supposed to show them, but I wasn't able to do the extra things, the leaping, caving, charismatic, Metaxian things, that I had vowed I would do on every trip.

Part of the trouble was my edginess over the Pulcheria situation. She danced in and out of my mind a thousand times a day. I pictured myself dropping down to 1105 or thereabouts and getting to work with her; surely she'd remember me from the spice shop, and surely that was an open invitation she had given me then.

Part of the trouble was the ebbing of my own sense of wonder. I had been on the Byzantium run for almost half a year, and the thrill was gone. A gifted Courier—a Metaxas—could derive as much excitement from his thousandth imperial coronation as from his third. And transmit that excitement to his people. Maybe I just wasn't a naturally gifted Courier. I was starting to become bored with the dedication of Haghia Sophia and the baptism of Theodosius II, the way an usher in a stimmo house gets weary of watching orgies.

Part of the trouble was the presence of Conrad Sauerabend in the group. That fat, sweaty, untidy man was an instant turnoff for me every time he opened his mouth.

He wasn't stupid. But he was gross and coarse and crude. He was a leerer, a gaper, a gawker. I could count on him to make some blunt and inappropriate remark anywhere.

At the Augusteum he whistled and said, "What a parking lot this would make!"

Inside Haghia Sophia he clapped a whitebearded priest on the back and said, "I just got to tell you what a swell church you got here, priesto."

During a visit to the icon-smashings of Leo the Isaurian, when Byzantium's finest works of art were being destroyed as idols, he interrupted an earnest iconoclastic fanatic and said, "Don't be such a dope. You know that you're hurting this city's tourist trade?"

Sauerabend was also a molester of little girls, and proud of it. "I can't help it," he explained. "It's my particular personal clutchup. The shrink calls it the Lolita complex. I like 'em twelve, thirteen years old. Pretty sick, huh?"

Pretty sick, yes. And also pretty annoying, because we had Palmyra Gosta-

man with us; Sauerabend couldn't stop staring at her. The lodgings provided on a time-tour don't always give the tourists much privacy, and Sauerabend ogled the poor girl into despair. She had some kind of hormone trouble, I guess, because she certainly didn't have a 16-year-old girl's body, and that was fine with Sauerabend. He drooled over her constantly, forcing her to dress and undress under a blanket as if this was the nineteenth or twentieth century; and when her father wasn't looking he'd get his fat paws on her and whisper lewd propositions in her ear. Finally I had to tell him that if he didn't stop bothering her, I'd bounce him from the tour. That settled him down for a few days. The girl's father, incidentally, thought the whole incident was very funny. Papa Gostaman also approved of his son Bilbo's affair with Miss Pistil. They went at it all the time. Bilbo looked pleased as hell all the time, which I suppose was reasonable enough for a fourteen-year-old boy having an affair with a woman ten years his senior.

I didn't find all this conducive to creative Couriering.

Then there were minor annoyances, such as the ineffectual lecheries of old Mr. Haggins, who persecuted the dim Mrs. Gostaman mercilessly. Or the insistence of Sauerabend on fiddling around with his timer. "You know," he said several times, "I bet I could ungimmick this thing so I could run it myself. Used to be an engineer, you know, before I took up stockbroking." I told him to leave his timer alone. Behind my back, he went on tinkering with it.

Still another headache was Capistrano, whom I met by chance in 1097 while Bohemond's Crusaders were entering Constantinople. He showed up while I was concentrating on the replay of the

Marge Hefferin scene. I wanted to see how permanent my correction of the past had been.

This time I lined my people up on the opposite side of the street. Yes, there I was; and there was Marge, eager and impatient and hot for Bohemond; and there was the rest of the group. As the Crusaders paraded toward us I felt almost dizzy with suspense. Would I see myself save Marge? Or would I see Marge leap toward Bohemond and be cut down? Or would some third alternative unreel? The fluidity, the mutability, of the time stream, that was what terrified me now.

Bohemond neared. Marge tensed and readied herself for the dash into the street. And a second Jud Elliott materialized out of nowhere across the way, right behind her. I saw the look of shock and amazement on Marge's face as my alter ego's steely fingers clamped tight to her flesh. I saw her whirl, sgruddle, sag; and as Bohemond went by, I saw myself vanish, leaving only the two of me, one on each side of the processional avenue.

I was awash with relief. Yet I was also troubled, because I knew now that my editing of this scene was embedded in the time-flow for anyone to see. Including some passing Time Patrolman, perhaps, who might happen to observe the brief presence of a doubled Courier and wonder what was going on. At any time in the next million millennia the Patrol might monitor that scene—and then, no matter if it went undiscovered until the year 8,000,000,000,008, I would be called to account for my unauthorized correction of the record. I could expect to feel the hand on my shoulder, the voice calling my name—

I felt a hand on my shoulder. A voice called my name.

I spun around. "Capistrano!"

"Sure, Capistrano. Did you expect someone else?"

"I—I—you surprised me, that's all." I was shaking. My knees were watery.

I was so upset that it took me a few seconds to realize how awful Capistrano looked.

He was frayed and haggard; his glossy dark hair was graying and stringy; he had lost weight and looked twenty years older than the Capistrano I knew. I sensed discontinuity and felt the fear that I always felt when confronted with someone out of my own future.

"What's the trouble?" I asked.

"I'm coming apart. Breaking up. Look, there's my tour over there." He indicated a clump of time-travelers who peered intently at the Crusaders. "I can't stay with them any more. They sicken me. Everything sickens me. It's the end for me, Elliott, absolutely the end."

"Why? What's wrong?"

"I can't talk about it here. When are you staying tonight?"

"Right here in 1097. The inn by the Golden Horn."

"I'll see you at midnight," Capistrano said. He clutched my arm for a moment. "It's the end, Elliott. Really the end. God have mercy on my soul!"

XLIII

Capistrano appeared at the inn just before midnight. Under his cloak he carried a lopsided bottle, which he uncorked and handed to me. "Cognac," he said. "From 1825, bottled in 1775. I just bought it up the line."

I tasted it. He slumped down in front of me. He looked worse than ever: old, drained, hollow. He took the cognac from me and gulped it greedily.

"Before you say anything," I told him,

"I want to know what your now-time basis is. Discontinuities scare me."

"There's no discontinuity."

"There isn't?"

"My basis is December, 2059. The same as yours."

"Impossible!"

"Impossible?" he repeated. "How can you say that?"

"Last time I saw you, you weren't even forty. Now you're easily past fifty. Don't fool me, Capistrano. Your basis is somewhere in 2070, isn't it? And if it is, for God's sake don't tell me anything about the years still ahead for me!"

"My basis is 2059," said Capistrano in a ragged voice. I realized from the thickness of his tone that this bottle of cognac was not the first for him tonight. "I am no older now than I ought to be, for you," he said. "The trouble is that I'm a dead man."

"I don't understand."

"Last month I told you of my great-grandmother, the Turk?"

"Yes."

"This morning I went down the line to Istanbul of 1955. My great-grandmother was then seventeen years old and unmarried. In a moment of wild despair I choked her and threw her into the Bosphorus. It was at night, in the rain; no one saw us. I am dead, Elliott. Dead."

"No, Capistrano!"

"I told you, long ago, that when the time came, I would make my exit that way. A Turkish slut—she who beguiled my great-grandfather into a shameful marriage—gone, now. And so am I. Once I return to now-time, I have never existed. What shall I do, Elliott? You decide. Shall I jump down the line now and end the comedy?"

Sweating, I said, after a deep pull of the cognac, "Give me the exact date

of your stopoff in 1955. I'll go down the line right now and keep you from harming her."

"You will not."

"Then you do it. Arrive in the nick of time and save her, Capistrano!"

He looked at me sadly. "What's the point? Sooner or later I'll kill her again. I have to. It's my destiny. I'm going to shunt down, now. Will you look after my people?"

"I've got a tour of my own," I reminded him.

"Of course. Of course. You can't handle more. Just see that mine aren't stranded. I have to go—have to—"

His hand was on his timer.

"Capis—"

He took the cognac with him when he jumped.

Gone. Extinct. A victim of suicide by timecrime. Blotted out of history's pages. I didn't know how to handle the situation. Suppose I went down to 1955 and prevented him from murdering his great-grandmother. He was already a non-person in now-time; could I retroactively restore him to existence? How did the Paradox of Transit Displacement function in reverse? This was a case I had not studied. I wanted to do whatever was best for Capistrano; I also had his stranded tourists to think about.

I brooded over it for an hour. Finally I came to a sane if not romantic conclusion: this is none of my business, I decided, and I'd better call in the Time Patrol. Reluctantly I touched the alarm stud on my timer, the signal which is supposed to summon a Patrolman at once.

Instantly a Patrolman materialized. Dave Van Dam, the belching blond boor I had met on my first day in Istanbul.

"So?" he said.

"Timecrime suicide," I told him. "Capistrano just murdered his great-grandmother and jumped back to now-time."

"Son of a goddam bitch. Why do we have to put up with these unstable creeps?"

I said, "He also left a party of tourists marooned here. That's why I called you in."

Van Dam spat elaborately. "Son of a goddam bitch," he said again. "Okay, I'm with it." He timed out of my room.

I was sick with grief over the stupid waste of a valuable life. I thought of Capistrano's charm, his grace, his sensitivity, all wasted because in a drunken moment of misery he had to timecrime himself. I didn't weep, but I felt like kicking furniture around, and I did.

Much later I learned that my dramatics had all been wasted. That slippery bastard Capistrano had had a change of heart at the last minute. Instead of shunting to 2059 and obliterating himself, he clung to his Transit Displacement invulnerability and stayed up the line in 1600, marrying a Turkish pasha's daughter and fathering three kids on her. The Time Patrol didn't succeed in tracing him until 1607, at which point they picked him up for multiple timecrime, hoisted him down to 2060, and sentenced him to obliteration. So he got his exit anyway, but not in a very heroic way. The Patrol also had to unmurder Capistrano's great-grandmother, unmarry him from the pasha's daughter in 1600, and uncreate those three kids, as well as find and rescue his stranded tourists, so all in all he was a great deal of trouble for everybody. "If a man wants to commit suicide," said Dave Van Dam, "why in hell can't he just drink carniphage in now-time and make it easier on the rest of us?" I had to agree. It was the only time in my life when

the Time Patrol and I saw things the same way.

XLIV

The mess over Capistrano and the general unsavoriness of this batch of tourists combined to push me into abysses of gloom.

I moved grimly along from epoch to epoch, but my heart wasn't in it. And by the time, midway through the second week, that we reached 1204, I knew I was going to do something disastrous.

Doggedly I delivered the usual orientation lecture.

"The old spirit of the Crusaders is reviving," I said, scowling at Bilbo, who was fondling Miss Pistil again, and scowling at Sauerabend, who was visibly dreaming of Palmyra Gostaman's meager breasts. "Jerusalem, which the Crusaders conquered a century ago, has been recaptured by the Saracens, but various Crusader dynasties still control most of the Mediterranean coast of the Holy Land. The Arabs now are feuding among themselves, and since 1199 Pope Innocent III has been calling for a new Crusade."

I explained how various barons answered the Pope's call.

I told how the Crusaders were unwilling to make the traditional land journey across all of Europe and down through Asia Minor into Syria. I told how they preferred to go by sea, landing at one of the Palestinian ports.

I discussed how in 1202 they applied to Venice, Europe's leading naval power of the time, for transportation.

I described the terms by which the ancient and crafty Doge Enrico Dandolo of Venice agreed to provide ships.

"Dandolo," I said, "contracted to transport 4,500 knights with their horses,

9,000 squires, and 20,000 infantrymen, along with nine months' provisions. He offered to throw in fifty armed galleys to escort the convoy. For these services he asked 85,000 silver marks, or about \$20,000,000 in our money. Plus half of all the territory or treasure that the Crusaders won in battle."

I told how the Crusaders agreed to this stiff price, planning to cheat the blind old Doge.

I told how the blind old Doge, once he had the Crusaders hung up in Venice, gripped them by the throats until they paid him every mark due him.

I told how the venerable monster seized control of the Crusade and set off in command of the fleet on Easter Monday, 1203—heading not for the Holy Land but for Constantinople.

"Byzantium," I said, "is Venice's great maritime rival. Dandolo doesn't care warm spit for Jerusalem, but wants very badly to get control of Constantinople."

I explicated the dynastic situation. The Comnenus dynasty had come to a bad end. When Manuel II died in 1180, his successor was his young son Alexius II, who shortly was murdered by his father's amoral cousin, Andronicus. The elegantly depraved Andronicus was destroyed in a particularly ghastly way by an enraged mob, after he had ruled harshly for a few years, and in 1185 there came to the throne Isaac Angelus, an elderly and bumbling grandson of Alexius I, by the female line. Isaac ruled for ten hap-hazard years, until he was dethroned, blinded, and imprisoned by his brother, who became Emperor Alexius III.

"Alexius III still rules," I said, "and Isaac Angelus is still in prison. But Isaac's son, also Alexius, has escaped and is in Venice. He has promised Dandolo huge sums of money if Dandolo

will restore his father to the throne. And so Dandolo is coming to Constantinople to overthrow Alexius III and make Isaac into an imperial puppet."

They didn't follow the intricacy of it. I didn't care. They'd figure it out as they saw things taking place.

I showed them the Fourth Crusade arriving at Constantinople at the end of June, 1203. I let them see Dandolo directing the capture of Scutari, Constantinople's suburb on the Asian side of the Bosphorus. I pointed out how the entrance to the port of Constantinople was guarded by a great tower and twenty Byzantine galleys, and blocked by a huge iron chain. I called their attention to the scene in which Venetian sailors boarded and took the Byzantine galleys while one of Dandolo's ships, equipped with monstrous steel shears, cut through the chain and opened the Golden Horn to the invaders. I allowed them to watch the superhuman Dandolo, ninety years old, lead the attackers over the ramparts of Constantinople. "Never before," I said, "have invaders broken into this city."

From a distance, part of a cheering mob, we watched Dandolo bring Isaac Angelus forth from his dungeon and name him Emperor of Byzantium, with his son crowned as co-emperor, by the style of Alexius IV.

"Alexius IV," I said, "now invites the Crusaders to spend the winter in Constantinople at his expense, preparing for their attack on the Holy Land. It is a rash offer. It dooms him."

We shunted down the line to the spring of 1204.

"Alexius IV," I said, has discovered that housing thousands of Crusaders is bankrupting Byzantium. He tells Dandolo that he is out of money and will no longer underwrite their expenses. A

furious dispute begins. While it proceeds, a fire starts in the city. No one knows who caused it, but Alexius suspects the Venetians. He sets several decrepit ships on fire and lets them drift into the Venetian fleet. Look."

We saw the fire. We saw the Venetians using boat-hooks to drag the blazing hulks away from their own ships. We saw sudden revolution break out in Constantinople, the Byzantines denouncing Alexius IV as the tool of Venice, and putting him to death. "Old Isaac Angelus dies a few days later," I said. "The Byzantines find the son-in-law of the expelled Emperor Alexius III, and puts him on the throne as Alexius V. This son-in-law is a member of the famous Ducas family. Dandolo has lost both his puppet emperors, and he is furious. The Venetians and the Crusaders decide now to conquer Constantinople and rule it themselves."

Once again I took a pack of tourists through scenes of battle, as on April 8 the struggle began. Fire, slaughter, rape — Alexius V in flight — the invaders plundering the city. April 13, in Hagia Sophia: Crusaders demolish the choir-stalls with their twelve columns of silver, and pull apart the altar, and seize 40 chalices and scores of silver candelabra. They take the Gospel, and the Crosses, and the altarcloth, and 40 incense burners of pure gold. Boniface of Montferrat, the leader of the Crusade, seizes the imperial palace. Dandolo takes the four great bronze horses that the Emperor Constantine had brought from Egypt 900 years before; he will carry them to Venice and place them over the entrance to St. Mark's Cathedral, where they still are. The priests of the Crusaders scurry after relics: two chunks of the True Cross, the head of the Holy Lance, the nails that had held Christ on the Cross, and

many similar objects, long revered by the Byzantines.

From the scenes of plunder we jumped to mid-May.

"A new Emperor of Byzantium is to be elected," I said. "He will not be a Byzantine. He will be a westerner, a Frank, a Latin. The conquerors choose Count Baldwin of Flanders. We can see his coronation procession."

We waited outside Haghia Sophia. Within, Baldwin of Flanders is donning a mantle covered with jewels and embroidered with eagle figures; he is handed a scepter and a golden orb; he kneels before the altar and is anointed; he is crowned; he mounts the throne.

"Here he comes," I said.

On a white horse, clad in glittering clothes that blaze as if on fire, Emperor Baldwin of Byzantium rides forth from the cathedral to the palace. Unwillingly, sullenly, the people of Byzantium pay homage to their alien master.

"Most of the Byzantine nobility has fled," I told my tourists, who were yearning for more battles, more fires. "The aristocracy has scattered to Asia Minor, to Albania, to Bulgaria, to Greece. For 57 years the Latins will rule here, though Emperor Baldwin's reign will be brief. In ten months he will lead an army against Byzantine rebels and will be captured by them, never to return."

Chrystal Haggins said, "When do the Crusaders go to Jerusalem?"

"Not these. They never bother to go. Some of them stay here, ruling pieces of the former Byzantine Empire. The rest go home stuffed with Byzantine loot."

"How fascinating," said Mrs. Haggins.

We went to our lodgings. A terrible weariness had me in its grip. I had done my job; I had shown them the Latin conquest of Byzantium, as advertised in

the brochures. Suddenly I couldn't stand their faces any longer. We dined, and they went to sleep, or at least to bed. I stood a while, listening to the passionate groans of Miss Pistil and the eager snorts of Bilbo Gostaman, listening to the protests of Palmyra as Conrad Sauerbend sneakily stroked her in the dark, and then I choked back tears of fury and surrendered to my temptations, and touched my timer, and shunted up the line. To 1105. To Pulcheria Ducas.

XLV

Metaxas, as always, was glad to help.

"It'll take a few days," he said. "Communications are slow here. Messengers going back and forth."

"Should I wait here?"

"Why bother?" Metaxas asked. "You've got a timer. Jump down three days, and maybe by then everything will be arranged."

I jumped down three days. Metaxas said, "Everything is arranged."

He had managed to get me invited to a soiree at the Ducas palace. Just about everyone of importance would be there, from Emperor Alexius Comnenus down. As my cover identity, I was to claim that I was Metaxas' cousin from the provinces, from Epirus. "Speak with a backwoods accent," Metaxas instructed me. "Dribble wine on your chin and make noises when you chew. Your name will be—ah—Nicetas Hyrtacenus."

I shook my head. "Too fancy. It isn't me."

"Well, then, George Hyrtacenus?"

"George Markezinis," I said.

"It sounds too twentieth-century."

"To them it'll sound provincial," I said, and as George Markezinis I went to the Ducas soiree.

Outside the gleaming marble walls of

the Ducas palace I saw two dozen Varangian guards stationed. The presence of these yellow-bearded Norse barbarians, the core of the imperial bodyguard, told me that Alexius was already within. We entered. Metaxas had brought his fair and wanton ancestress Eudocia to the party.

Within, a dazzling scene. Musicians. Slaves. Tables heaped with food. Wine. Gorgeously dressed men and women. Superb mosaic floors; tapestried walls, heavy with cloth of gold. The tinkle of sophisticated laughter; the shimmer of female flesh beneath nearly transparent silks.

I saw Pulcheria at once.

Pulcheria saw me.

Our eyes met, as they had met in the shop of sweets and spices, and she recognized me, and smiled enigmatically, and again the current surged between us. In a later era she would have fluttered her fan at me. Here, she withdrew her jeweled gloves and slapped them lightly across her left wrist. Some token of encouragement? She wore a golden circlet on her high, smooth forehead. Her lips were rouged.

"That's her husband to her left," Metaxas whispered. "Come. I'll introduce you."

I stared at Leo Ducas, my great-great-great-grandfather, and my pride in having so distinguished an ancestor was tinged by the envy I felt for this man.

He was, I knew from my genealogical studies, 35 years old, twice the age of his wife. A tall man, graying at the temples, with unbyzantine blue eyes, a neatly clipped little beard, a high-bridged, narrow nose, and thin, tightly compressed lips, he seemed austere, remote, unutterably dignified. I suspected that he might be boringly noble. He did



make an impressive sight, and there was no austerity about his tunic of fine cut, nor about his jewelry, his rings and pendants and pins.

Leo presided over the gathering in serene style, befitting a man who was one of the premier nobles of the realm, and who headed his branch of the great house of Ducas. Of course, Leo's house was empty, and perhaps that accounted for the faint traces of despair that I imagined I saw on his handsome face. As Metaxas and I approached him, I picked up a stray exchange of conversation from two court ladies to my left:

"—no children, and such a pity, when all of Leo's brothers have so many. And he the eldest!"

"Pulcheria's still young, though. She looks like she'll be a good breeder."

"If she ever gets started. Why, she's close to eighteen!"

I wanted to reassure Leo, to tell him that his seed would descend even unto the twenty-first century, to let him know that in only a year's time Pulcheria would give him a son, Nicetas, and then Simeon, John, Alexander, and more, and that Nicetas would sire six children, among them the princely Nicephorus whom I had seen seventy years down the line, and the son of Nicephorus would follow an exiled leader into Albania, and then, and then, and then—

Metaxas said, "Your grace, this is my mother's sister's third son, George Markezinis, of Epirus, now a guest at my villa during the harvest season."

"You've come a long way," said Leo Ducas. "Have you been to Constantinople before?"

"Never," I said. "A wonderful city! The churches! The palaces! The bathhouses! The food, the wine, the clothes! The women, the beautiful women!"

Pulcheria glowed. She gave me that

sidewise smile of hers again, on the side away from her husband. I knew she was mine. The sweet fragrance of her drifted toward me. I began to ache and throb.

Leo said, "You know the emperor, of course?"

With a grand sweep of his arm he indicated Alexius, holding court at the far end of the room. I had seen him before: a short, stocky man of clearly imperial bearing. A circle of lords and ladies surrounded him. He seemed gracious, sophisticated, relaxed in manner, the true heir to the Caesars, the defender of civilization in these dark times. At Leo's insistence I was presented to him. He greeted me warmly, crying out that the cousin of Metaxas was as dear to him as Metaxas himself. We talked for a while, the emperor and I; I was nervous, but I carried myself well, and Leo Ducas said, finally, "You speak with emperors as though you've known a dozen of them, young man."

I smiled. I did not say that I had several times glimpsed Justinian, that I had attended the baptisms of Theodosius II, Constantine V, the yet unborn Manuel Comnenus, and many more, that I had knelt in Hagia Sophia not far from Constantine XI on Byzantium's last night, that I had watched Leo the Isaurian direct the Iconoclasts. I looked shy and said, "Thank you, your grace."

XLVI

Byzantine parties consisted of music, a dance of slavegirls, some dining, and a great deal of wine. The night wore on; the candles burned low; the assembled notables grew tipsy. In the gathering darkness I mingled easily with members of the famed families, meeting men and women named Comnenus, Phocas, Skleros, Dalassenes, Diogenes, Bo-

tanates, Tzimisces, and Ducas. I made courtly conversation and impressed myself with my glibness. I watched arrangements for adultery being made subtly, but not subtly enough, behind the backs of drunken husbands. I bade goodnight to Emperor Alexius and received an invitation to visit him at Blachernae, just up the road. I fended off Metaxas' Eudocia, who had had too much to drink and wanted a quick balling in a back room. (She finally selected one Basil Diogenes, who must have been seventy years old.) I answered, evasively, a great many questions about my "cousin" Metaxas, whom everybody knew, but whose origins were a mystery to all. And then, three hours after my arrival, I found that I was at last speaking with Pulcheria.

We stood quietly together in an angle of the great hall. Two flickering candles gave us light. She looked flushed, excited, even agitated; her breasts heaved and a line of sweat-beads stippled her upper lip. I had never beheld such beauty before.

"Look," she said. "Leo dozes. He loves his wine more than most other things."

"He must love beauty," I said. "He has surrounded himself with so much of it."

"Flatterer!"

"No. I try to speak the truth."

"You don't often succeed," she said. "Who are you?"

"Markezinis of Epirus, cousin to Metaxas."

"That tells me very little. I mean, what are you looking for in Constantinople?"

I took a deep breath. "To fulfill my destiny, by finding the one whom I am meant to find, the one whom I love."

That got through to her. Seventeen-

year-old girls are susceptible to that kind of thing, even in Byzantium, where girls mature early and marry at twelve. Call me Heathcliff.

Pulcheria gasped, crossed her arms chastely over the high mounds of her breasts, and shivered. I think her pupils may have momentarily dilated.

"It's impossible," she said.

"Nothing's impossible."

"My husband—"

"Asleep," I said. "Tonight—under this roof—"

"No. We can't."

"You're trying to fight destiny, Pulcheria."

"George!"

"A bond holds us together—a bond stretching across all of time—"

"Yes, George!"

Easy, now, great-great-multi-great-grandson, don't talk too much. It's cheap timecrime to brag that you're from the future.

"This was fated," I whispered. "It had to be!"

"Yes! Yes!"

"Tonight."

"Tonight, yes."

"Here."

"Here," said Pulcheria.

"Soon."

"When the guests leave. When Leo is in bed. I'll have you hidden in a room where it's safe—I'll come to you—"

"You knew this would happen," I said, "that day when we met in the shop."

"Yes. I knew. Instantly. What magic did you work on me?"

"None, Pulcheria. The magic rules us both. Drawing us together, shaping this moment, spinning the strands of destiny toward our meeting, upsetting the boundaries of time itself—"

"You speak so strangely, George. So

beautifully. You must be a poet!"

"Perhaps."

"In two hours you'll be mine."

"And you mine," I said.

"And for always."

I shivered, thinking of the Time Patrol swordlike above me. "For always, Pulcheria."

XLVII

She spoke to a servant, telling him that the young man from Epirus had had too much to drink, and wished to lie down in one of the guest chambers. I acted appropriately woozy. Metaxas found me and wished me well. Then I made a candlelight pilgrimage through the maze of the Ducas palace and was shown to a simple room somewhere far in the rear. A low bed was the only article of furniture. A rectangular mosaic in the center of the floor was the only decoration. The single narrow window admitted a shaft of moonlight. The servant brought me a washbasin of water, wished me a good night's rest, and left me alone.

I waited a billion years.

Sounds of distant revelry floated to me. Pulcheria did not come.

It's all a joke, I thought. A hoax. The young but sophisticated mistress of the house is having some fun with the country cousin. She'll let me fidget and fret in here alone until morning, and then send a servant to give me breakfast and show me out. Or maybe after a couple of hours she'll tell one of her slavegirls to come in here and pretend she's Pulcheria. Or send in a toothless crone, while her guests watch through concealed slots in the wall. Or—

A thousand times I considered fleeing. Just touch the timer, and shoot up the line to 1204, where Conrad Sauerabend

and Palmyra Gostaman and Mr. and Mrs. Haggins and the rest of my tourists lie sleeping and unguarded.

Clear out? Now? When everything had gone so neatly so far? What would Metaxas say to me when he found out I had lost my nerve?

I remembered my guru, black Sam, asking me, "If you had a chance to attain your heart's desire, would you take it?"

Pulcheria was my heart's desire; I knew that now.

I remembered Sam Spade telling me, "You're a compulsive loser. Losers infallibly choose the least desirable alternative."

Go ahead, great-great-multi-great-grandson. Skip out of here before the luscious primordial ancestress can offer herself to you.

I remembered Emily, the helix-parlor girl with the gift of prophecy, crying shrilly, "Beware love in Byzantium! Beware! Beware!"

I loved. In Byzantium.

Rising, I paced the room a thousand times, and stood at the door listening to the faint laughter and the far-off songs, and then I removed all of my clothing, carefully folding each garment and placing it on the floor beside my bed. I stood naked except for my timer, and I debated removing that too. What would Pulcheria say when she saw that tawny plastic band at my waist? How could I explain it?

I unfastened the timer too, separating myself from it for the first time in my career up the line. Waves of real terror burst over me. I felt more naked than naked, without it; I felt stripped down to my bones. Without my timer around my hips I was the slave of time, like all these others. I had no means of quick escape. If Pulcheria planned some cruel

joke and I was caught without my timer in easy reach, I was doomed.

Hastily I put the timer back on.

Quickly I dressed again, feeling foolish. And waited a billion years more. And saw dawnlight beginning to blend with moonlight in my slit of a window.

And the door opened, and Pulcheria came into the room, and bolted the door behind her.

She had wiped away her heavy makeup and had taken off all her jewelry except a single gold pectoral, and she had changed from her party clothes into a light silken wrap. Even by the dim light I saw she was nude beneath it, and the soft curves of her body inflamed me almost to insanity. She glided toward me.

I took her in my arms and tried to kiss her. She didn't understand kissing. The posture one must adopt for mouth-to-mouth contact was alien to her. I had to arrange her. I tilted her head gently. She smiled, puzzled but willing.

Our lips touched.

She quivered and flattened her body tight against mine. She picked up the theory of kissing in a hurry.

My hands slid down her shoulders. I drew off her wrap; she trembled a little as I bared her.

She was shy and wanton at once, a superb combination.

When I undressed, she saw the timer and touched it, plucked at it, but asked for no explanation. We tumbled down together on the bed.

What happened between myself and Pulcheria Ducas on that Byzantine morning in 1105 was far more significant a transaction than what happened between myself and the Empress Theodora half a millennium earlier, and more significant than what had happened between myself and any number of girls a full mil-

lennium later. With Pulcheria it was different. With Pulcheria the orgasm was only the symbolic sealing of something greater. For me, Pulcheria was the embodiment of beauty and grace, and her easy surrender to me made me an emperor more mighty than Alexius, and nothing physical mattered a tenth as much as the fact that she and I had come together in trust, in faith, in shared desire, in . . . love. There you have the heart of my philosophy. I stand revealed as a naked romantic. This is the profundity I've distilled from all my experience: sex with love is better than sex without love. Q.E.D. I can also show, if you like, that to be healthy is better than to be ill, and that having money is superior to being poor. My capacity for abstract thought is limitless.

XLVIII

Nevertheless, even though we had proven the philosophical point quite adequately, we went on to prove it all over again half an hour later. Redundancy is the soul of understanding.

Afterward we lay side by side, glowing sweetly. It was the moment to offer my partner a weed and share a different sort of communion, but of course that was impossible here. I felt the lack.

"Is it very different where you come from?" Pulcheria asked. "I mean, the people, how they dress, how they talk."

"Very different."

"I sense a great strangeness about you, George. Even the way you held me in bed. Not that I am an expert on such things, you must understand. You and Leo are the only men I have ever had."

"Can this be true?"

Her eyes blazed. "You take me for a whore?"

"Well, of course not, but—" I floun-

dered. "In my country," I said desperately, "a girl takes many men before she marries. No one objects to it. It's the custom."

"Not here. We are well sheltered. I was married at twelve; that gave me little time for liberties." She frowned, sat up, leaned across me to look in my eyes. "Are women really so loose in your country?"

"Truth, Pulcheria, they are."

"But you are Byzantines! You are not barbarians from the north! How can it be allowed, this taking of many men?"

"It's our custom." Lamely.

"Perhaps you are not truly from Epirus," she suggested. "Perhaps you come from some more distant place. I tell you again, you are very strange to me, George."

"Don't call me Goerge. Call me Jud," I said boldly.

"Jud?"

"Jud."

"Why should I call you this?"

"It's my inner name. My *real* name, the one I *feel*. George is just—well, a name I use."

"Jud. Jud. Such a name I have never heard. You *are* from a strange land! You *are*!"

I gave her a sphinxy smile. "I love you," I said.

"So strange," she murmured. "So different. And yet I felt drawn to you from the first moment. You know, I've long dreamed of being as wicked as this, but I never dared. Oh, I've had offers, dozens of offers, but it never seemed worth the trouble. And then I saw you, and I felt this fire in me, this—this hunger. Why? Tell me why. You are neither more nor less attractive than many of the men I might have given myself to, and yet you were the one. Why?"

"It was destiny," I told her. "As I

said before. An irresistible force, pulling us together, across the—"

—centuries—

"—sea," I finished lamely.

"You will come to me again?" she said.

"Again and again and again."

"I'll find ways for us to meet. Leo will never know. He spends so much of his time at the bank—you know, he's one of the directors—and in his other businesses, and with the emperor—he hardly pays attention to me. I'm one of his many pretty toys. We'll meet, Jud, and we'll know pleasure together often, and—" Her dark eyes flashed. "—and perhaps you'll give me a child."

I felt the heavens open and rain thunderbolts upon me.

"Five years of marriage and I have no child," she went on. "I don't understand. Perhaps I was too young, at first—I was so young—but now, nothing. Nothing. Give me a child, Jud. Leo will thank you for it—I mean, he'll be happy, he'll think it's his—you even have a Ducas look about you, in the eyes, perhaps, there'd be no trouble. Do you think we made a child tonight?"

"No," I said.

"No? How can you be sure?"

"I have ways," I said. I stroked her silkiness. Let me go twenty more days without my pill, though, and I could plant babies aplenty in you, Pulcheria! And knot the fabric of time beyond all unraveling. My own great-great-multi-great-grandfather? Am I seed of my own seed? Did time recurve on itself to produce me? No. I'd never get away with it. I'd give Pulcheria passion, but not parturition. "Dawn's here," I whispered.

"You'd better leave. Where can I send messages to you?"

"At Metaxas."

"Good. We'll meet again two days

hence, yes? I'll arrange everything."

"I'm yours, whenever you say it, Pulcheria."

"Two days. But now, go. I'll show you out."

"Too risky. Servants will be stirring. Go to your room, Pulcheria. I can get out by myself."

"But—impossible—"

"I know the way."

"Do you?"

"I swear it," I said.

She needed some convincing, but at length I persuaded her to spare herself the risk of getting me out of the palace. We kissed once more, and she donned her wrap, and I caught her by the arm and pulled her to me, and released her, and she went out of the room. I counted sixty seconds off. Then I set my timer and jumped six hours up the line. The party was going full blast. Casually I walked through the building, avoiding the room where my slightly earlier self, not yet admitted to Pulcheria's joyous body, was chatting with Emperor Alexius. I left the Ducas palace unnoticed. In the darkness outside, beside the seawall along the Golden Horn, I set my timer again and shunted down the line to 1204. Now I hurried to the inn where I had left my sleeping tourists. I reached it less than three minutes after my departure—seemingly so many days ago—for Pulcheria's era.

All well. I had had my incandescent night of passion, my soul was purged of longings, and here I was, back at my trade once more, and no one the wiser. I checked the beds.

Mr. and Mrs. Haggins, yes.

Mr. and Mrs. Gostaman, yes.

Miss Pistil and Bilbo, yes.

Palmyra Gostaman, yes.

Conrad Sauerabend, yes? No.

Conrad Sauerabend—

No Sauerabend. Sauerabend was missing. His bed was empty. In those three minutes of my absence, Sauerabend had slipped away.

Where?

I felt the early pricklings of panic.

XLIX

Calm. Calm. Stay calm. He went out to the pissoir, is all. He'll be right back.

Item One, a Courier must remain aware of the location of all of the tourists in his care at all times. The penalty—

I kindled a torch at the smouldering hearth and rushed out into the hall.

Sauerabend? Sauerabend?

Not in the john. Not downstairs rummaging in the kitchen. Not prowling in the wine cellar.

Sauerabend?

Where the devil are you, you pig?

The taste of Pulcheria's lips was still on my own. Her sweat mingled with mine. All the delicious forbidden joys of transtemporal incest continued to tingle in my soul.

The Time Patrol will make a nonperson out of me for this, I thought. I'll say, "I've lost a tourist," and they'll say, "How did it happen," and I'll say, "I stepped out of the room for three minutes and he vanished," and they'll say, "Three minutes, eh? You aren't supposed to—" and I'll say, "It was only three minutes. Christ, you can't expect me to watch them 24 hours a day!" And they'll be sympathetic, but nevertheless they'll have to check the scene, and in the replay they'll discover me wantonly shunting out for some other point on the line, and they'll track me to 1105 and find me with Pulcheria, and see that not only am I guilty of negligence as a Courier but also that I've committed in-

cest with my great-great-multi-great—
Calm. Calm.

Into the street, now. Flash the torch around. Sauerabend? Sauerabend? No Sauerabend.

If I were a Sauerabend, where would I sneak off to?

To the home of some twelve-year-old Byzantine girl? How could he know where to find one? How to get in? No. No. He couldn't have done that. Where is he, though? Strolling through the town? Out for fresh air? He should be asleep. Snoring. No. I realized that when I left he hadn't been asleep, hadn't been snoring; he'd been bothering Palmyra Gostaman. I hurried back to the inn. There wasn't any point in roaming Constantinople at random for him.

In mounting panic I woke up Palmyra. She rubbed her eyes, complained a little, blinked. Torchlight glittered off her flat bare chest.

"Where did Sauerabend go?" I whispered harshly.

"I told him to leave me alone. I told him—"

"Yes, but where did he go?"

"I don't know. He just got up and went away. It was dark in here. I fell asleep maybe two minutes ago. Why'd you have to wake me up?"

"Some help you are," I muttered. "Go back to sleep."

Calm, Judson, calm. There's an easy solution to this. If you weren't in such a flutter, you'd have thought about it long ago. All you have to do is edit Sauerabend back into the room, the way you edited Marge Hefferin back to life.

It's illegal, of course. Couriers are not supposed to engage in time-corrections. That's for the Patrol to do. But this will be such a small correction. You can handle it quickly and no one will be the wiser. You got away with the Heffer-

in revision, didn't you? Yes. Yes. It's your only chance, Jud.

I sat down on the edge of my bed and tried to plan my actions properly. My night with Pulcheria had dulled the edge of my intellect. Think, Jud. Think as you never thought before.

I put great effort into my thinking.

What time was it when you shunted up to 1105?

Fourteen minutes to midnight.

What time was it when you came back down the line to 1204?

Eleven minutes to midnight.

What time is it now?

One minute to midnight.

When did Sauerabend slip out of the room, then?

Somewhere between fourteen to and eleven to.

Therefore, how far up the line must you shunt to intercept him?

About thirteen minutes.

You realize that if you jump back more than thirteen minutes, you'll encounter your prior self, who will be getting ready to depart for 1105? That's the Paradox of Duplication.

I've got to risk it. I'm in worse trouble than that already.

You'd better shunt, then, and get things fixed up.

Here I go.

I timed my shunt perfectly, going up the line thirteen minutes less a few seconds. I noticed with satisfaction that my earlier self had already departed, and that Sauerabend had not. The ugly fat bastard was still in the room, sitting up in his bed with his back to me.

It would be simplicity itself to stop him now. I simply forbid him to leave the room, and keep him here for the next three minutes, thus cancelling his departure. The instant that my prior self gets back—at eleven minutes to mid-

night—I shunt ten minutes down the line, resuming my proper place in the stream of time. Sauerabend thus will have been continuously guarded by his Courier (in one incarnation or another) throughout the whole dangerous period from fourteen minutes to midnight onward. There will be a very slight moment of duplication for me when I overlap my returning self, but I'll clear out of his time-level so fast that he probably won't notice. And all will be as it should have been.

Yes. Very good.

I started across the room toward Sauerabend, meaning to block his path when he tried to leave. He pivoted, still sitting on his bed, and saw me.

"You're back?" he said.

"You bet. And I don't—"

He put his hand to his timer and vanished.

"Wait!" I yelled, waking everybody up. "You can't do that! It's impossible! A tourist's timer doesn't—"

My voice trailed away into a foolish-sounding gurgle. Sauerabend was gone, time-shunting before my eyes. Yelling at the place where he had been wouldn't bring him back. The wiliness of the loathsome slob! Fooling with his timer, boasting that he could gimmick it into working for him, somehow shorting the seal and getting access to the control—

Now I was in a terrible mess of messes. One of my own tourists on the loose with an activated timer, jumping all over anywhen—what a monstrous botch! I was desperate. The Time Patrol was bound to pick him up, of course, before he could commit too many serious time-crimes, but beyond any doubt I'd be censured for letting him get away.

Unless I could catch him before he left.

Fifty-six seconds had elapsed since I had jumped here to keep Sauerabend from leaving.

Without hesitating further, I set my timer back sixty seconds, and shunted. There was Sauerabend again, sitting on his bed. There was my other self, starting across the room toward him. There were the other sleeping tourists, not yet awakened by my shout.

Okay, now. We outnumber him. We've got him.

I launched myself at Sauerabend, meaning to grab his arms and keep him from shunting.

He turned as soon as I moved. With devilish swiftness he reached down to his timer.

He shunted. He was gone. I sprawled on his empty bed, numb with shock.

The other Jud glared at me and said, "Where in hell did you come from?"

"I'm 56 seconds ahead of you. I missed my first chance at collaring him, and jumped back to try a second time."

"And missed again, I see."

"So I did."

"And duplicated us, besides."

"At least that part can be fixed," I said. I checked the time. "In another thirty seconds, you jump back sixty seconds and get yourself into the time-flow."

"Like crap I will," said Jud B

"What do you mean?"

"What's the point of it? Sauerabend's going to be gone, or at least on his way. I won't be able to grab him, will I?"

"But you've got to go," I said.

"Why?"

"Because it's what I did at that point in the flow."

"You had a reason for it," he said. "You had just missed Sauerabend, and you wanted to jump back a minute and try catching him then. But I haven't had a chance even to miss him. Besides, why worry about the time-flow?"

It's already been changed."

He was right. We had run out the 56 seconds. Now we were at the point when I had made my first try at blocking Sauerabend's exit, but Jud B, who presumably was living through the minute I had lived through just prior to Sauerabend's first disappearance, had lived through that minute in an altogether different way from me. Everything was messed up. I had spawned a duplicate who wouldn't go away and who had nowhere to go. It was now thirteen minutes to midnight. In another two minutes we'd have a third Jud here—the one who shunted down straight from Pulcheria's arms to find Sauerabend missing in the first place. He had a destiny of his own: to spend ten minutes in panicky dithering, and then to jump back from one-minute-to-midnight to fourteen-minutes-to-midnight and kick off the whole process of confusions that culminated in the two of us.

"We've got to get out of here," Jud B said.

"Before *he* comes in."

"Right. Because if he sees us he may never get around to making his shunt back to fourteen minutes to midnight, and that—"

"—might eliminate you and me from existing."

"But where do we go?" he asked.

"We could jump back to three or four minutes ago, and try to grab Sauerabend together."

"No good. We'll overlap another of us—the one who's on his way to Pulcheria."

"So what? We'll make him get on his way as soon as we've nailed down Sauerabend."

"Still no good. Because if we miss Sauerabend again, we'll induce still another change in the time-flow, and may-

be bring on a third one of us. And set up a hall of mirrors effect, banging back and forth until there are a million of us in the room. He's too quick for us with that timer."

"You're right," I said, wishing Jud B had gone back when he belonged before it was too late.

It was now twelve minutes to midnight.

"We've got sixty seconds to clear out. Where do we go?"

"We don't go back and try to grab Sauerabend again. That's definite."

"Yes."

"But we *must* locate him."

"Yes."

"And he could be anywhen at all."

"Yes."

"Then two of us aren't enough. We've got to get help."

"Metaxas."

"Yes. And maybe Sam."

"Yes. And how about Capistrano?"

"Is he available?"

"Who knows? We'll try. And Buonocore. And Jeff Monroe. This is a *crisis!*"

"Yes," I said. "Listen, we've only got ten seconds now. Come on with me!"

We rushed out of the room and down the back way, missing the arrival of the eleven-minutes-to-midnight Jud by a few seconds. We crouched in a dark alcove under the stairs, thinking about the Jud who was two flights up discovering the absence of Sauerabend. I said, "This is going to call for teamwork. You shunt up the line to 1105, find Metaxas, and explain what's happened. Then call in reinforcements and get everybody busy tracing the time-line for Sauerabend."

"What about you?"

"I'm going to stay right here," I said. "Until one minute to midnight. At that point the fellow upstairs is going to

shunt back a little less than thirteen minutes to look for Sauerabend—”

“—leaving his people unguarded—”

“—yes, and *somebody*'s got to stay with them, so I'll go back upstairs as soon as he leaves, and slip back into the main Jud Elliott identity as their Courier. And I'll stay there, proceeding on a normal basis, until I hear from you. Okay?”

“Okay.”

“Get going, then.”

He got going. I huddled down in a little heap, shaking with fright. It all hit me in one mighty reaction. Sauerabend was gone, and I had spawned an alter ego by the Paradox of Duplication, and in the space of one evening I had committed more timecrimes than I could name, and—

I felt like crying.

I didn't realize it, but the mess was only beginning.

L

At one minute to midnight I pulled myself together and went upstairs to take over the job of being the authentic Jud Elliott. As I entered the room I allowed myself the naive hope that I'd find everything restored to the right path, with Sauerabend in his bed again. Let it have been fixed retroactively, I prayed. But Sauerabend wasn't in the room.

Did that mean that he'd never be found?

Not necessarily. Maybe, to avoid further tangles, he'd be returned to our tour slightly down the line, say in the early hours of the night, or just before dawn.

Or maybe he'd be restored to the point he jumped from—thirteen minutes or so before midnight—but I somehow wouldn't become aware of his return through

some mysterious working of the Paradox of Transit Displacement, holding me outside the whole system.

I didn't know. I didn't even *want* to know. I just wanted Conrad Sauerabend located and put back in his proper position in time, before the Patrol realized what was up and let me have it.

Sleep was out of the question. Miserably I slumped on the edge of my bed, getting up now and then to check on my tour people. The Costamans slept on. The Hagginses slept on. Palmyra and Bilbo and Miss Pistil slept on.

At half past two in the morning there was a light knock at the door. I leaped up and yanked it open.

Another Jud Elliott stood there.

“Who are you?” I asked morosely.

“The same one who was here before. The one who went for help. There aren't any more of us now, are there?”

“I don't think so.” I stepped out into the hall with him. “Well? What's been going on?”

He was grimy and unshaven. “I've been gone for a week. We've searched all up and down the line.”

“Who has?”

“Well, I went to Metaxas first, in 1105, just as you said. He's terribly concerned for our sake. What he did, first of all, was to put all his servants to work, checking to see if anybody answering to Sauerabend's description could be found in or around 1105.”

“It can't hurt, I guess.”

“It's worth trying,” my twin agreed. “Next, Metaxas went down to now-time and phoned Sam, who came flying in from New Orleans and brought Sid Buonocore with him. Metaxas also alerted Kolettis, Gompers, Plastiras, Pappas—all the Byzantium Couriers, the whole staff. Because of discontinuity problems we're not notifying anyone who's on an

earlier now-time basis than December 2059, but that still gives us a big posse. What we're doing now, what we've been doing for the past week, is simply moving around, year by year, hunting for Sauerabend, asking questions in the marketplace, sniffing for clues. I've been at it eighteen, twenty hours a day. So have all the others. It's wonderful, how loyal they are!"

"It certainly is," I said. "What are the chances of finding him, though?"

"Well, we assume that he hasn't left the Constantinople area, although there's nothing to prevent him from going down the line to 2059, hopping off to Vienna or Moscow, and vanishing up the line again. All we can do is plug away. If he doesn't turn up in Byzantine, we'll check Turkish, and then pre-Byzantine, and then we'll pass the word to now-time so Couriers on other runs can watch for him, and—"

He sagged. He was exhausted.

"Look," I said, "You've got to get some rest. Why don't you go back to 1105 and settle down at Metaxas' place for a few days. Then come back here when you're rested, and let me join the search. We can alternate that way indefinitely. Meanwhile let's keep this night in 1204 as our reference point. Whenever you jump to me, jump to this night, so we don't lose contact. It may take us a couple of lifetimes, but we'll get Sauerabend back into the group before morning comes."

"Right."

"All clear, then? You spend a few days at the villa resting up, and come back here half an hour from now. And then I'll go."

"Clear," he said, and went down to the street to jump.

I returned to the room and resumed my melancholy vigil. At three in the morning Jud B was back, looking like a

new man. He had shaved, taken a bath or two, changed his clothes, obviously had had plenty of sleep. "Three days of rest at Metaxas' place," he said. "Magnifique!"

"You look great. Too great. You didn't, perhaps, sneak off to fool around with Pulcheria?"

"The thought didn't occur to me. But what if I had? You bastard, are you warning me to leave her alone?"

I said, "You don't have any right to—"

"I'm *you*, remember? You can't be jealous of yourself."

"I guess you can't," I said. "Stupid of me."

"Stupider of me," he said. "I *should* have dropped in on her while I was there."

"Well, now it's my turn. I'll put in some time on searching, then stop at the villa for rest and recuperation, and maybe have some fun with our beloved. You won't object to that, will you?"

"Fair's fair," he sighed. "She's yours as much as she's mine."

"Correct. When I've taken care of everything, I'll get back here at—let's see—quarter past three tonight. Got it?"

We synchronized our timetables for the 1105 end of the line to avoid discontinuities; I didn't want to get there while he was still there, or, worse, before he had ever arrived. Then I left the inn and shunted up the line. In 1105 I hired a chariot and was taken out to the villa on a golden autumn day.

Metaxas, bleary-eyed and stubble-faced, greeted me at the porch by asking, "Which one are you: A or B?"

"A. B's taking over for me at the inn in 1204. How's the search going?"

"Lousy," said Metaxas. "But don't give up hope. We're with you all the way. Come inside and meet some old friends."

I said to them, "I'm sorry as hell to be putting you through all this trouble."

The men I respected most in the world laughed and grinned and chuckled and spat and said, "Shucks, 't ain't nothin'."

They were frayed and grimy. They had been working hard and fruitlessly for me, and it showed. I wanted to hug all of them at once. Black Sambo, and plastic-faced Jeff Monroe, and shifty-eyed Sid Buonocore. Pappas, Kolettis, Plastiras. They had rigged a chart to mark off the places where they hadn't found Conrad Sauerabend. The chart had a lot of marks on it.

Sam said, "Don't worry, boy. We'll track him down."

"I feel so awful, making you give up free time—"

"It could have happened to any one of us," Sam said. "It wasn't your fault."

"It wasn't?"

"Sauerabend gimmicked his timer behind your back, didn't he? How could you have prevented it?" Sam grinned. "We got to help you out. We don't know when same'll happen to us."

"All for one," said Madison Jefferson Monroe. "One for all."

"You think you're the first Courier to have a customer skip out?" Sid Buonocore asked. "Don't be a craphead! Those timers can be rigged for manual use by anyone who understands Benchley Effect theory."

"They never told me—"

"They don't like to advertise it. But it happens. Five, six times a year, somebody takes a private time-trip behind his Courier's back."

I said, "What happens to the Courier?"

"If the Time Patrol finds out? They

fire him," said Buonocore bleakly. "What we try to do is cover for each other, before the Patrol moves in. It's a bitch of a job, but we got to do it. I mean, if you don't look after one of your own when he's in trouble, who in hell will look after you?"

"Besides," said Sam, "it makes us feel like heroes."

I studied the chart. They had looked for Sauerabend pretty thoroughly in early Byzantium—Constantine through the second Theodosius—and they had checked out the final two centuries with equal care. Searching the middle had so far been a matter of random investigations. Sam, Buonocore, and Monroe were coming off search duty now and were going to rest; Kilettis, Plastiris, and Pappas were getting ready to go out, and they were planning strategy.

Everybody went on being very nice to me during the discussion of ways to catch Sauerabend. I felt a real sentimental glow of warmth for them. My comrades in adversity. My companions. My colleagues. The Time Musketeers. My heart expanded. I made a little speech telling them how grateful I was for all their help. They looked embarrassed and told me once again that it was a simple matter of good fellowship, the golden rule in action.

The door opened and a dusty figure stumbled in, wearing anachronistic sunglasses. Najeeb Danjani, my old tutor! He scowled, slumped down on a chair, and gestured impatiently to nobody in particular, hoping for wine.

Kolettis handed him wine. Danjani poured some of it into his hand and used it to wash the dust from his sunglasses. Then he gulped the rest.

"Mr. Dajani!" I cried. "I didn't know they had called you in too! Listen, I want to thank you for helping—"

"You moron," said Dajani quietly. "How did I ever let you get your Courier license?"

LII

Dajani had just returned from a survey of the city in 630-650, with no luck at all. He was tired and irritated, and he obviously wasn't happy about spending his layoff searching for somebody else's runaway tourist.

He put out my sentimental glow in a hurry. I tried to foist on him my gratitude speech, and he said sourly, "Skip the grease job. I'm doing this because it'll reflect badly on my capabilities as an instructor if the Patrol finds out what kind of anthropoid I let loose as a Courier. It's my own hide I'm protecting."

There was a nasty moment of silence. A lot of shuffling of feet and clearing of throats took place.

"That's not very gratifying to hear," I said to Dajani.

Buonocore said, "Don't let him upset you, kid. Like I told you, any Courier's tourist is likely to gimmick his timer, and—"

"I don't refer to the loss of the tourist," said Dajani testily. "I refer to the fact that this idiot managed to duplicate himself while trying to edit the mistake!" He gargled wine. "I forgive him for the one, but not for the other."

"The duplication is pretty ugly," Buonocore admitted.

"It's a serious thing," said Kolettis.

"Bad karma," Sam said. "No telling how we'll cover that one up."

"I can't remember a case to match," declared Pappas.

"A messy miscalculation," Plastiras commented.

"Look," I said, "the duplication was

an accident. I was so much in a sweat to find Sauerabend that I didn't stop to calculate the implications of—"

"We understand," Sam said.

"It's a natural error, when you're under pressure," said Jeff Monroe.

"Could have happened to anyone," Buonocore told me.

"A shame. A damned shame," murmured Pappas.

I started to feel less like an important member of a close-knit fraternity, and more like a pitied halfwit nephew who can't help leaving little puddles of mess wherever he goes. The halfwit's uncles were trying to clean up a particularly messy mess for him, and trying to keep the halfwit serene so he won't make a worse mess.

When I realized what the real attitude of these men toward me was, I felt like calling in the Time Patrol, confessing my timecrimes, and requesting eradication. My soul shriveled. My manhood withered. I, the copulator with empresses, the seducer of secluded noblewomen, the maker of smalltalk with emperors, I, the last of the Ducases, I, the strider across millennia, I, the brilliant Courier in the style of Metaxas, I . . . I, to these veteran Couriers here, was simply an upright mass of perambulating dreck.

LIII

Metaxas, who had not spoken for fifteen minutes, said finally, "If those of you who are going are ready to go, I'll get a chariot to take you into town."

Kilettis shook his head. "We haven't allotted eras yet. But it'll take only a minute."

There was a buzzing consultation over the chart. It was decided that Kolettis would cover 700-725, Plastiras 1150-1175, and I would inspect 725-745. Pap-

pas had brought a plague suit with him and was going to make a survey of the plague years 745-747, just in case Sauerabend had looped into that proscribed period by accident.

I was surprised that they trusted me to make a time-jump all by myself, considering what they obviously thought of me. But I suppose they figured I couldn't get into any worse trouble. Off we went to town in one of Metaxas' chariots. Each of us carried a small but remarkably accurate portrait of Conrad Sauerabend, painted on a varnished wooden plaque by a contemporary Byzantine artist hired by Metaxas. The artist had worked from a holophoto; I wonder what he'd made of that.

When we reached Constantinople proper, we split up and, one by one, timed off to the eras we were supposed to search. I materialized up the line in 725 and relized the little joke that had been played on me.

This was the beginning of the era of iconoclasm, when Emperor Leo III had first denounced the worship of painted images. At that time most of the Byzantines were fervent iconodules—image-worshippers—and Leo set out to smash the cult of icons, first by speaking and preaching against them, then by destroying an image of Christ in the chapel of the Chalke, or Brazen House, in front of the Great Palace. After that things got worse; images and image-makers were persecuted, and Leo's son issued a proclamation declaring, "There shall be rejected, removed and cursed out of the Christian Church every likeness which is made out of any material whatever by the evil art of painters."

And in such an era I was supposed to walk around town holding a little painting of Conrad Sauerabend, asking people, "Have you seen this man anywhere?"

My painting wasn't exactly an icon. Nobody who looked at it was likely to mistake Sauerabend for a saint. Even so, it caused a lot of trouble for me.

"Have you seen this man anywhere?" I asked, and took out the painting.

In the marketplace.

In the bathhouses.

On the steps of Hagia Sophia.

Outside the Great Palace.

"Have you seen this man anywhere?" In the Hippodrome during a polo match.

At the annual distribution of free bread and fish to the poor on May 11, celebrating the anniversary of the founding of the city.

In front of the Church of Saints Sergius and Bacchus.

"I'm looking for this man whose portrait I have here."

Half the time I didn't even manage to get the painting fully into the open. They'd see a man pulling an icon from his tunic, and they'd run away, screaming, "Iconodule dog! Worshipper of images!"

"But this isn't—I'm only looking for—you mustn't mistake this painting for—you won't you come back?"

I got pushed and shoved and expectorated upon. I got bullied by imperial guards and glowered at by iconoclastic priests. Several times I was invited to attend the underground ceremonies of the secret iconodules.

I didn't get much information about Conrad Sauerabend.

Still, despite all the difficulties, there were always some people who looked at the painting. None of them had seen Sauerabend, although a few "thought" they had noticed someone resembling the man in the picture. I wasted two days tracking one of the supposed ressemblers, and found no resemblance at all.

I kept on, jumping from year to year. I lurked at the fringes of tourist groups, thinking that Sauerabend might prefer to stick close to people of his own era.

Nothing. No clue.

Finally, footsore and discouraged, I hopped back down to 1105. At Metaxas' place I found only Pappas, who looked even more weary and bedraggled than I did.

"It's useless," I said. "We aren't going to find him. It's like looking for—looking for—"

"A needle in a timestack," Pappas said helpfully.

LIV

I had earned a little rest before I returned to that long night in 1204 and sent my alter ego here to continue the search. I bathed, slept, had a garlicky slavegirl two or three times, and brooded. Kolettis returned: no luck. Plastiras came back: no luck. They went down the line to resume their Courier jobs. Gompers, Herschel, and Melamed, donating time from their current layoffs, appeared and immediately set out on the quest for Sauerabend. The more Couriers who volunteered to help me in my time of need, the worse I felt.

I decided to console myself in Pulcheria's arms.

I mean, as long as I happened to be in the right era, and as long as Jud B had neglected to stop in to see her, it seemed only proper. We *had* had some sort of date. Just about the last thing Pulcheria had said to me after that night of nights was, "We'll meet again two days hence, yes? I'll arrange everything."

How long ago had that been?

At least two weeks on the 1105 now-time basis, I figured. Maybe three.

She was supposed to have sent a mes-

sage to me c/o Metaxas, telling me where and how we could have our second meeting. In my concern with Sauerabend I had forgotten about that. Now I raced all around the villa, asking Metaxas' butlers and his major domo if any messages had arrived from town for me.

"No," they said. "No messages."

"Think carefully. I'm expecting an important message from the Ducas palace. From Pulcheria Ducas."

"From whom?"

"Pulcheria Ducas."

"No messages, sir."

I clothed myself in my finest finery and clippocoppled into Constantinople. Did I dare present myself at the Ducas place uninvited? I did dare. My country-bumpkin cover identity would justify my possible breach of etiquette.

At the gate of the Ducas palace I rang for the servants, and an old groom came out, the one who had shown me to the chamber that night where Pulcheria had given herself to me. I smiled in a friendly way; the groom peered blankly back. Forgotten me, I thought.

I said, "My compliments to Lord Leo and Lady Pulcheria, and would you kindly tell them that George Markezinis of Epirus is here to call upon them?"

"To Lord Leo and Lady—" the groom repeated.

"Pulcheria," I said. "They know me. I'm cousin to Themistoklis Metaxis, and—" I hesitated, feeling even more foolish than usual at giving my pedigree to a groom. "Get me the major domo," I snapped.

The groom scuttled within.

After a long delay, an imperious-looking individual in the Byzantine equivalent of livery emerged and surveyed me.

"Yes?"

"My compliments to Lord Leo and Lady Pulcheria, and would you kindly

tell them—”

“Lady who?”

“Lady Pulcheria, wife to Leo Ducas. I am George Markezinis of Epirus, cousin to Themistoklis Metaxas, who only several weeks ago attended the party given by—”

“The wife to Leo Ducas,” said the major-domo forstily, “is named Euprepia.”

“Euprepia?”

“Euprepia Ducas, the lady of this household. Man, what do you want here? If you come drunken in the middle of the day to trouble Lord Leo, I—”

“Wait,” I said. “Euprepia? Not Pulcheria?” A golden bezant flickered into my hand and fluttered swiftly across to the waiting palm of the major-domo. “I’m not drunk, and this is important. When did Leo marry this—this Euprepia?”

“Four years ago.”

“Four—years—ago. No, that’s impossible. Five years ago he married Pulcheria, who—”

“You must be mistaken. The Lord Leo has been married only once, to Euprepia Macrembolitissa, the mother of his son Basil and of his daughter Zoe.”

The hand came forth. I dropped another bezant into it.

Dizzily I murmured, “His eldest son is Nicetas, who isn’t even born yet, and he isn’t supposed to have a son named Basil at all, and—my god, are you playing a game with me?”

“I swear before Christ Pantocrator that I have said no word but the truth,” declared the major-domo resonantly.

Tapping my pouch of bezants, I said, desperate now, “Would it be possible for me to have an audience with the Lady Euprepia?”

“Perhaps so, yes. But she is not here. For three months now she has rested at

the Ducas palace on the coast at Trebizond, where she awaits her next child.”

“Three months. Then there was no party here a few weeks ago?”

“No, sir.”

“The Emperor Alexius wasn’t here? Nor Themistoklis Metaxas? Nor George Markezinis of Epirus? Nor—”

“None of those, sir. Can I help you further?”

“I don’t think so,” I said, and went staggering away from the gate of the Ducas palace like unto one who has been smitten by the wrath of the gods.

LV

Dismally I wandered in a southeasterly way along the Golden Horn until I came to the maze of shops, marketplaces, and taverns near the place where there would one day be the Galata Bridge, and where today there is still a maze of shops, marketplaces, and taverns. Through those narrow, interweaving, chaotic streets I marched like a zombie, having no destination. I saw not, neither did I think; I just put one foot ahead of the other one and kept going, until, early in the afternoon, kismet once more seized me by the privates.

I stumbled randomly into a tavern, a two-story structure of unpainted boards. A few merchants were downing their midday wine. I dropped down heavily at a warped and wobbly table in an unoccupied corner of the room and sat staring at the wall, thinking about Leo Ducas’ pregnant wife Euprepia.

A comely tavern-slut appeared and said, “Some wine?”

“Yes. The stronger the better.”

“A little roast lamb too?”

“I’m not hungry, thanks.”

“We make very good lamb here.”

“I’m not hungry,” I said. I stared

somberly at her ankles. They were very good ankles. I looked up at her calves, and then her legs vanished within the folds of her simple cloth wrap. She strode away and came back with a flask of wine. Then at last I looked at her face.

She could have been Pulcheria's twin sister.

Same dark, mischievous eyes. Same flawless olive skin. Same full lips and aquiline nose. Same age, about seventeen. The differences between this girl and my Pulcheria were differences of dress, of posture, and of expression. This girl was coarsely clad; she lacked Pulcheria's aristocratic elegance of bearing; and there was a certain pouting sullenness about her, the look of a girl who is living below her station in life and is angry about it.

I said, "You could almost be Pulcheria!"

She laughed harshly. "What kind of nonsensical talk is that?"

"A girl I know, who resembles you closely—Pulcheria, her name is—"

"Are you insane, or only drunk? I am Pulcheria. Your little game isn't pleasing to me, stranger."

"You—Pulcheria?"

"Certainly."

"Pulcheria Ducas?"

She cackled in my face. "Ducas, you say? Now I know you're crazy. Pulcheria Photis, wife of Heracles Photis the innkeeper!"

"Pulcheria — Photis —" I repeated numbly. "Pulcheria — Photis — wife — of — Heracles — Photis —"

She leaned close over me. Not haughty now but worried, she said in a low voice, "I can tell by your clothes that you're someone important. What do you want here? Has Heracles done something wrong?"

"I'm here just for wine," I said. "But listen, tell me this one thing: are you the Pulcheria who was born Botaniates?"

She looked stunned. "You know that!"

"It's true?"

"Yes," said my adored Pulcheria, and sank down next to me on the bench. "But I am a Botaniates no longer. For five years, now—ever since Heracles—the filthy Heracles—ever since he—" She took some of my wine in her agitation. "Who are you, stranger?"

"George Markezinis of Epirus."

The name meant nothing to her.

"Cousin to Themistoklis Metaxas."

She gasped. "I knew you were someone important! I knew!" Trembling prettily, she said, "What do you want with me?"

The other patrons in the tavern were beginning to stare at us. I said, "Can we go somewhere to talk? Someplace private?"

Her eyes took on a cool, knowing look. "Just a moment," she said, and went out of the tavern. I heard her calling to someone, shouting like any fish-wife, and after a moment a ragged girl of about fifteen came into the room. Pulcheria said, "Look after things, Anna. I'm going to be busy." To me she said, "We can go upstairs."

She led me to a bedchamber on the second floor of the building and carefully bolted the door behind us.

"My husband," she said, "has gone to Galata to buy meat, and will not be back for two hours. While the loathsome pig is away, I don't mind earning a bezant or two from a handsome stranger."

Her clothing fell away and she stood incandescently nude before me. Her smile was a defiant one, a smile that said that she retained her inner self no matter what stains of degradation others inflicted on her. Her eyes flashed with

lusty zeal.

She tumbled down onto the rough cot.

"Two bezants?" she suggested.

Pulcheria transformed into a tavern whore? My goddess? My adored one?

"Why do you hesitate?" she asked. "Come, climb aboard, give the fat dog Heracles another pair of horns. What's wrong? Do I seem ugly to you?"

"Pulcheria — Pulcheria — I love you, Pulcheria —"

She giggled, shrill in her delight. She waved her heels at me.

"Come on, then!"

"You were Leo Ducas' wife," I murmured. "You lived in a marble palace, and wore silk robes, and went about the city escorted by a watchful duenna. And the emperor was at your party, and just before dawn you came to me, and gave yourself to me, and it was all a dream, Pulcheria, all a dream, eh?"

"You are a madman," she said. "But a handsome madman, and I yearn to have you, and I yearn also for your bezants. Come close. Are you shy? Look, put your hand here, feel how hot Pulcheria grows, how she throbs —"

I was rigid with desire, but I knew I couldn't touch her. Not this Pulcheria, this coarse, shameless, wanton, sluttish wench, this gorgeous creature who capered and pumped and writhed impatiently on the cot before me.

I pulled out my pouch and emptied it over her nakedness, dumping golden bezants into her navel, her loins, spilling them across her breasts. Pulcheria shrieked in astonishment. She sat up, clutching at the money, scrambling for it, her breasts heaving and swaying, her eyes bright.

I fled.

At the villa I found Metaxas and said, "What's the name of Leo Ducas' wife?"

"Pulcheria."

"When did you last see her?"

"Three weeks ago, when we went to that party."

"No," I said. "You're suffering from Transit Displacement, and so am I. Leo Ducas is married to someone named Euprepia, and has two children by her, and a third on the way. And Pulcheria is the wife of a tavernkeeper named Heracles Photis."

"Have you gone spotty?" Metaxas asked.

"The past has been changed. I don't know how it happened, but there's been a change, right in my own ancestry, don't you see, and Pulcheria's no longer my ancestress, and God knows if I even exist any more. If I'm not descended from Leo Ducas and Pulcheria, then who am I descended from, and —"

"When did you find all this out?"

"Just now. I went to look for Pulcheria, and — Christ, Metaxas, what am I going to do?"

"Maybe there's been a mistake," he said calmly.

"No. No. Ask your own servants. They don't undergo Transit Displacement. Ask them if they've ever heard of a Pulcheria Ducas. They haven't. Ask them the name of Leo Ducas' wife. Or go into town and see for yourself. There's been a change in the past, don't you see, and everything's different, and — Christ, Metaxas! Christ!"

He took hold of my wrists and said in a very quiet tone, "Tell me all about this from the beginning, Jud."

But I had no chance to. For just then big black Sam came rushing into the hall, whooping and screaming.

"We found him! God damn, but we found him!"

"Who?" Metaxas said.

"Who?" I said simultaneously.

"Who?" Sam repeated. "Who the hell do you think? Sauerabend. Conrad F.X. Sauerabend himself!"

"You found him?" I said, limp with relief. "Where? When? How?"

"Right here in 1105," said Sam. "This morning, Melamed and I were in the marketplace, just checking around a little, and we showed the picture, and sure enough, some peddler of pig's feet recognized him. Sauerabend's been living in Constantinople for the past five or six years, running a tavern down near the water. He goes under the name of Heracles Photis—"

"No!" I bellowed. "No, you black bastard, no, no, no, no, no! It isn't true!"

And I launched myself at him in blind fury.

And I drove my fists into his belly, and sent him reeling backward toward the wall.

And he looked at me strangely, and caught his breath, and came toward me and picked me up and dropped me. And picked me up and dropped me. And picked me up a third time, but Metaxas made him put me down.

Sam said gently, "It's true that I am a black bastard, but was it really necessary to say so that loudly?"

Metaxas said, "Give him some wine, somebody. I think he's going off his head."

I said, seizing control of myself somehow, "Sam, I didn't mean to call you names, but it absolutely cannot be the case that Conrad Sauerabend is living under the name of Heracles Photis?"

"Why not?"

"Because—because—"

"I saw him myself," Sam said. "I

had wine in his tavern no more than five hours ago. He's big and fat and red-faced, and thinks a great deal of himself. And he's got this little Byzantine wife, maybe sixteen, seventeen years old, who waits on table in the place, and I bet sells her tail in the upstairs rooms—"

"All right," I said in a dead man's voice. "You win. The wife's name is Pulcheria."

Metaxas made a choking sound.

Sam said, "I didn't ask about her name."

"She's seventeen years old, and she comes from the Botaniates family," I went on, "which is one of the important Byzantine families, and only Buddha knows what she's doing married to Heracles Photis Conrad Sauerabend. And the past has been changed, Sam, because up until a few weeks ago on my now-time basis she was the wife of Leo Ducas and lived in a palace near the imperial palace, and it happened that I was having a little love affair with her, and it also happens that until the past got changed she and Leo Ducas were my great-great-multi-great-grandparents, and it seems to have happened that a very stinking coincidence has taken place, which I don't comprehend the details of at all, except that I'm probably a nonperson now and there's no such individual as Pulcheria Ducas. And now, if you don't mind, I'm going to go into a quiet corner and cut my throat."

"This isn't happening," said Sam. "This is all a bad dream."

LVII

But, of course, it wasn't. It was as real as any other event in this fluid and changeable cosmos.

The three of us drank a great deal of wine, and Sam gave me some of the other details. How he had asked about

in the neighborhood concerning Sauerabend/Photis, and had been told that the man had arrived mysteriously from some other part of the country, about the year 1099. How the regulars at his tavern disliked him, but came to the place just to get a view of his beautiful wife. How there was general suspicion that he was engaged in some kind of illegal activity.

"He excused himself," Sam said, "and told us that he had to go across to Galata to do some marketing. But Kolettis followed him and found that he didn't go marketing at all. He went into some kind of warehouse on the Galata side, and apparently he disappeared. Kolettis went in after him and couldn't find him anywhere. He must have time-jumped, Kolettis assumed. Then this Photis reappeared, maybe half an hour later, and took the ferry back into Constantinople."

"Timecrime," Metaxas suggested. "He's engaged in smuggling."

"That's what I think," said Sam. "He's using the early twelfth century as a base of operations, under this cover identity of Photis, and he's running artifacts or gold coins or something like that down the line to now-time."

"How did he get mixed up with the girl, though?" Metaxas asked.

Sam shrugged. "That part isn't clear yet. But now that we've found him, we can trace him back up the line until we find the point of his arrival. And see exactly what he's been up to."

I groaned. "How are we ever going to restore the proper sequence of events?"

Metaxas said, "We've got to locate the precise moment to which he made his jump out of your tour. Then we station ourselves there, catch him as soon as he materializes, take away that trick timer of his, and bring him back to 1204. That extricates him from the time-flow right

where he came in, and puts him back into your 1204 trip where he belongs."

"You make it sound so simple," I said. "But it isn't. What about all the changes that have been made in the past?" His five years of marriage to Pulcheria Bota-niates—"

"Nonevents," said Sam. "As soon as we whisk Sauerabend from 1099 or whenever back into 1204, his marriage to this Pulcheria is automatically deleted, right? The time-flow resumes its unedited shape, and she marries whoever she was supposed to marry—"

"Leo Ducas," I said. "My ancestor."

"Leo Ducas, yes," Sam went on. "And for everybody in Byzantium, this whole Heracles Photis episode will never have happened. The only ones who'll know about it are us, because we're subject to Transit Displacement."

"What about the artifacts Sauerabend's been smuggling to now-time?" I asked.

Sam said, "They won't be there. They won't ever have been smuggled. And his fences down there won't have any recollection of having received them, either. The fabric of time will have been restored, and the Patrol won't be the wiser for it, and—"

"You're overlooking one little item," I said.

"Which is?"

"In the course of these shenanigans I generated an extra Jud Elliott. Where does he go?"

"Christ," Sam said. "I forgot about him!"

LVIII

I had now been running around 1105 for quite a while, and I figured it was time to get back to 1204 and let my alter ego know something of what was

going on. So I made the shunt down the line and got to the inn at quarter past three on that same long night of Conrad Sauerabend's disappearance from 1204. My other self was slouched gloomily on his bed, studying the ceiling's heavy beams.

"Well?" he said. "How goes it?"

"Catastrophic. Come out into the hall."

"What's happening?"

"Brace yourself," I said. "We finally tracked Sauerabend down. He shunted to 1099, and took a cover identity as a tavernkeeper. A year later he married Pulcheria."

I watched my other self crumble.

"The past has been changed," I went on. "Leo Ducas married somebody else, Euprepia something, and has two and a half children by her. Pulcheria's a servingwench in Sauerabend's tavern. I saw her there. She didn't know who I was, but she offered to sleep with me for two bezants. Sauerabend is smuggling goods down the line, and—"

"Don't tell me any more," he said. "I don't want to hear any more."

"I haven't told you the good part yet."

"There's a good part?"

"The good part is that we're going to unhappen all of this. Sam and Metaxas and you are going to trace Sauerabend back from 1105 to the moment of his arrival in 1099, and unarrive him, and shunt him back here into this evening. Thus canceling the whole episode."

"What happens to us?" my other self asked.

"We discussed that, more or less," I said vaguely. "We aren't sure. Apparently we're both protected by Transit Displacement, so that we'll continue to exist even if we get Sauerabend back into his proper time-flow."

"But where did we come from? There can't be creation of something out of

nothing! Conservation of mass—"

"One of us was here all along," I reminded him. "As a matter of fact I was here all along. I brought you into being by looping back fifty-six seconds into your time-flow."

"Balls," he said. "I was in that time-flow all along, doing what I was supposed to do. You came looping in out of nowhere. You're the goddam paradox, buster."

"I've lived fifty-six seconds longer than you, absolute. Therefore I must have been created first."

"We were both created in the same instant, on 11 October 2035," he shot back at me. "The fact that our timelines got snarled because of your faulty thinking has no bearing on which of us is more real than the other. The question is not who's the real Jud Elliott, but how we're going to continue to operate without getting in each other's way."

"We'll have to work out a tight schedule," I said. "One of us working as a Courier while the other one's hiding out up the line. And the two of us never in the same time at once, up or down the line. But how—"

"I have it," he said. "We'll establish a now-time existence in 1105, the way Metaxas has done, only for us it'll be continuous. There'll always be one of us pegged to now-time in the early twelfth century as George Markezinis, living at Metaxas' villa. The other one of us will be functioning as a Courier, and he'll go through a trip-and-layoff cycle—"

"—taking his layoff anywhere but in the 1105 basis—"

"—right. And when he's completed the cycle he'll go to the villa and pick up the Markezinis identity, and the other one will go down the line and report for Courier duty—"

"—yes, and if we keep everything co-ordinated, there's no reason why the

Patrol should ever find out about us—”
“Brilliant!”

“And the one who’s being Markezinis,” I finished, “can always be carrying on a full-time affair with Pulcheria, and she’ll never know that we’re taking turns with her.”

“As soon as Pulcheria is herself again.”

“As soon as Pulcheria is herself again,” I agreed.

That was a sobering thought. Our whole giddy plan for alternating our identities was just so much noise until we straightened out the mess Sauerabend had caused.

I checked the time. “You get back to 1105 and help Sam and Metaxas,” I said. “Shunt here again by half past three tonight.”

“Right,” he said, and left.

LIX

He came back on time, looking disgusted, and said, “We’re all waiting for you on August 9, 1100, by the land wall back of Blachernae, about a hundred meters to the right of the first gate.”

“What’s the story?”

“Go and see for yourself. It makes me sick to think about it. Go, and do what has to be done, and then this filthy lunacy will be over. Go on. Jump up and join us there.”

“What time of day?” I asked.

He pondered a moment. “Twenty past noon, I’d say.”

I went out of the inn and walked to the land wall, and set my timer with care, and jumped. The transition from late-night darkness to midday brightness left me blinded for an instant; when I stopped blinking I found myself standing before a grim-faced trio: Sam, Metaxas—and Jud B.

“Jesus,” I said, “don’t tell me we’ve committed another duplication!”

“This time it’s only the Paradox of Temporal Accumulation,” my alter ego said. “Nothing serious.”

I was too muddled to reason it through. “But if we’re both here, who’s watching our tourists down in 1204?”

“Idiot,” he said fiercely, “think four-dimensionally! How can you be so stupid if you’re identical to me? Look, I jumped here from one point in that night in 1204, and you jumped from another point fifteen minutes away. When we go back, we each go to our proper starting-point in the sequence. I’m due to arrive at half past three, and you aren’t supposed to be there until quarter to four, but that doesn’t mean that neither of us there right now. Or all these others of us.”

I looked around. I saw at least five groups of Metaxas-Sam-me arranged in a wide arc near the wall. Obviously they had been monitoring this time-point closely, making repeated short-run shunts to check on the sequence of events, and the Cumulative Paradox was building up a multitude of them.

“Even so,” I said dimly, “it somehow seems that I’m not correctly perceiving the linear chain of—”

“Stuff the linear chain of!” the other Jud snarled at me. “Will you look over there there? There, on the far said of the gate!”

He pointed.

I looked.

I saw a gray-haired woman in simple clothes. I recognized her as a somewhat younger version of the woman whom I had seen escorting Pulcheria Ducas into the shop of sweets and spices that day, seemingly so long ago, five years down the line in 1105. The duenna was propped up against the city wall, giggling to herself. Her eyes were closed.

A short distance from her was a girl of about twelve, who could only have

been Pulcheria's younger self. The resemblance was unmistakable. This girl still had a child's unformed features, and her breasts were only gentle bumps under her tunic, but the raw materials of Pulcheria's beauty were there.

Next to the girl was Conrad Sauerabend, in Byzantine lower-middle-class clothes.

Sauerabend was cooing in the girl's ear. He was dangling before her face a little twenty-first century gimcrack, a gyroscopic pendant or something like that. His other hand was under her tunic. Pulcheria was frowning, but yet she wasn't making any move to get the hand away. She seemed a little uncertain about what Sauerabend was up to, but she was altogether fascinated by the toy, and perhaps didn't mind the wandering fingers, either.

Metaxas said, "He's been living in Constantinople for a little less than a year, and commuting frequently to 2059 to drop off marketable artifacts. He's been coming by the wall every day to watch the little girl and her duenna take their noontime stroll. The girl is Pulcheria Botaniates, and that's the Botaniates palace just over there. About half an hour ago Sauerabend came along and saw the two of them. He gave the duenna a floater and she's been up high ever since. Then he sat down next to the girl and began to charm her. He's really very slick with little girls."

"It's his hobby," I said.

"Watch what happens now," said Metaxas.

Sauerabend and Pulcheria rose and walked toward the gate in the wall. We faded back into the shadows to remain unobserved. Most of our paradoxical duplicates had disappeared, evidently shunting to other positions along the line to monitor the events. We watched as

the fat man and the lovely little girl strolled through the gate, into the countryside just beyond the city boundary.

I started to follow.

"Wait," said Sam. "See who's coming now? That's Pulcheria's older brother Andronicus."

A young man, perhaps eighteen, was approaching. He halted and stared in broad disbelief at the giggling duenna. We saw him rush toward her, shake her, yank her to her feet. The woman tumbled down again, helpless.

"Where's Pulcheria?" he roared. "Where is she?"

The duenna laughed.

Young Botaniates, desperate, rushed about the deserted sunbaked street, yelling for his maiden sister. Then he hurried through the gate.

"We follow him," Metaxas said. Several other groups of us were already outside the gate, I discovered when we got there. Andronicus Botaniates ran hither and thither. I heard the sound of girlish laughter coming from, seemingly, the wall itself.

Andronicus heard it too. There was a breach in the wall, a shallow cave-like opening at ground level, perhaps five meters deep. He ran toward it. We ran toward it too, jostling with a mob that consisted entirely of our duplicated selves. There must have been fifteen of us—five of each.

Andronicus entered the breach in the wall and let out a terrible howl. A moment later I peered in.

Pulcheria, naked, her tunic down near her ankles, stood in the classic position of modesty, with one hand flung across her budding breasts and the other spread over her loins. Next to her was Sauerabend, with his clothes open. I suppose he had been in the process of maneuvering Pulcheria into a suitable position

when the interruption came.

"Outrage!" cried Andronicus. "Foulness! Seduction of a virgin maiden! I call you all to witness! Look at this, this monstrosity, this criminal deed!"

And he caught Sauerabend by one hand and his sister by the other, and tugged them both out into the open.

"Bear witness!" he bellowed. We got out of the way before Sauerabend could recognize us, although I think he was too terrified to see anyone. Pitiful Pulcheria, trying to hide all of herself at once, was huddled into a ball at her brother's feet; but he kept pulling her up, exposing her, crying, "Look at the little whore! Look at her! Look, look, look!"

And a considerable crowd came to look.

We moved to one side. I felt like throwing up. That vile molester of children, that Humbert of stockbrokers—

Now Andronicus had drawn his sword and was trying to kill either Sauerabend or Pulcheria or both. But the onlookers prevented him, bearing him to the ground and taking away his weapon. Pulcheria, in frantic dismay at having her nakedness exposed to such a multitude, grabbed a dagger from someone else and attempted to kill herself, but was stopped in time; finally an old man threw his cloak about her. All was confusion.

Metaxas said calmly, "We followed the rest of the sequence from here before you arrived, then doubled back to wait for you. Here's what happened: The girl was engaged to Leo Ducas, but of course it was impossible for him to marry her after half of Byzantium had seen her naked like this. Besides, she was considered tainted, even though Sauerabend didn't actually have time to get into her. The marriage was called off. Her family, blaming her for letting Sauer-

abend charm her into taking off her clothes, disowned her. Meanwhile Sauerabend was given the choice of marrying the girl he dishonored, or suffering the usual penalty."

"Which was?"

"Castration," said Metaxas. "And so, as Heracles Photis, Sauerabend married her, changing the pattern of history at least to the extent of depriving you of your proper ancestral line. Which we're now going to correct."

"Not me," said Jud B. "I've seen all I can stand. I'm going back to 1204. I'm due there at half past three in the morning to tell this guy to come back here and watch things."

"But—" I said.

"Never mind figuring out the paradoxes," Sam said. "We've got work to do."

"Relieve me at quarter to four," said Jud B, and shunted.

Metaxas and Sam and I coordinated our timers. "We go up the line," said Metaxas, "by exactly one hour. To finish the comedy." We shunted.

LX

And with great precision and no little relief, we finished the comedy.

In this fashion—

We shunted to noon, exactly, on that hot summer day of the year 1100, and took up positions along the wall of Constantinople. And waited, trying hard to ignore the other versions of ourselves who passed briefly through our time-level on snooping missions of their own.

The pretty little girl and the watchful duenna came into view.

My heart ached with love for young Pulcheria, and I ached in other places as well, out of lust for the Pulcheria who would be, the Pulcheria whom I

had known.

The pretty little girl and the unsuspecting duenna, keeping close together, strolled past us.

Conrad Sauerabend/Heracles Photis appeared. Discordant sounds in the orchestra; twirling of mustaches; hisses. He studied the girl and the woman. He patted his bulging belly. He drew forth a snubby little floater and checked its snout. Leering enthusiastically, he came forward, planning to thrust the floater against the duenna's arm and, by giving her an hour of the giggling highs, to gain unimpeded access to the little girl.

Metaxas nodded to Sam.

Sam nodded to me.

We approached Sauerabend on a slanting path of approach.

"Now!" said Metaxas, and we went into action.

Huge black Sam lunged forward and clasped his right forearm across Sauerabend's throat. Metaxas seized Sauerabend's left wrist and bent his entire arm backward, far from the controls of the timer that could whiz him from our grasp. Simultaneously, I caught Sauerabend's right arm, jerking it up and back and forcing him to drop the floater. This entire maneuver occupied perhaps effective immobilization of Sauerabend. The duenna, meanwhile, had wisely fled with Pulcheria from the area at the sight of this unseemly struggle.

Sam now reached under Sauerabend's clothing and deprived him of his gimbicked timer.

Then we released him. Sauerabend, who undoubtedly thought that he had been set upon by bandits, saw me and grunted a couple of shocked monosyllables.

I said, "You thought you were pretty clever, didn't you?"

He grunted some more.

I said, "Gimmicking your timer, slipping away, thinking you could set up in business for yourself as a smuggler. Eh? You didn't believe we'd catch you?"

I didn't tell him of the weeks of hard work that we had put in. I didn't tell him of the timecrimes we ourselves had committed for the sake of detecting him — the paradoxes we had left strewn all up and down the line, the needless duplication of ourselves. I didn't tell him that we had just pinched six years of his life as a Byzantine tavern-keeper into a pocket universe that, so far as he was concerned, had no existence whatever. Nor did I tell him of the chain of events that had made him the husband of Pulcheria Botaniatas in that pinched-off universe, depriving me of my proper ancestry. All of those things had now unhappened. There now would be no tavernkeeper named Heracles Photis selling meat and drink to the Byzantines of the years 1100-1105.

Metaxas produced a spare timer, ungimmicked, that he had carried for the purpose.

"Put it on," he said.

Sullenly, Sauerabend donned it.

I said, "We're going back to 1204, more or less to the time you set out from. And then we're going to finish our tour and go back down the line to 2059. And God help you if you cause any more trouble for me, Sauerabend. I won't report you for timecrime, because I'm a merciful man, even though an unauthorized shunt like yours is very definitely a criminal act; but if you do anything whatever that displeases me in the slightest between now and the moment I'm rid of you, I'll make you roast for it. Clear?"

He nodded bleakly.

To Sam and Metaxas I said, "I can handle this from here on. Thanks for

everything. I can't possibly tell you—"

"Don't try," said Metaxas, and together they shunted down the line.

I set Sauerabend's new timer and my own, and drew forth my pitchpipe. "Here we go," I said, and we shunted into 1205.

LXI

At quarter to four on that very familiar night in 1204 I went once more up the stairs of the inn, this time with Sauerabend. Jud B paced restlessly just within the door of the room. He brightened at the sight of my captive. Sauerabend looked puzzled at the presence of two of me, but he didn't dare say anything.

"Get inside," I said to him. "And don't monkey with your goddam timer or you'll suffer for it."

Sauerabend went in.

I said to Jud B, "The nightmare's over. We grabbed him, took away his timer, put a regulation one on him, and here he is. The whole operation took just exactly four hours, right?"

"Plus who remembers how many weeks of running up and down the line."

"No matter now. We got him back. We start from scratch."

"And there's now an extra one of us," Jud B pointed out. "Do we work that little deal of taking turns?"

"We do. One of us stays with these clowns, takes them on down to 1453 as scheduled, and back to the 21st century. The other one of us goes to Metaxas' villa. Want to flip a coin?"

"Why not?" He pulled a bezant of Alexius I from his pouch, and let me inspect it for kosherness. It was okay: a standing figure of Alexius on the obverse, an image of Christ enthroned on the reverse. We stipulated that Alexius

was heads and Jesus was tails. Then I flipped the coin high, caught it with a quick snap of my hand, and clapped it down on the back of my other hand. I knew, from the feel of the concave coin's edge against my skin, that it had landed heads up.

"Tails," said the other Jud.

"Tough luck, amigo." I showed him the coin. He grimaced and took it back from me.

Gloomily he said, "I've got three or four days left with this tour, right—Then two weeks of layoff, which I can't spend in 1105. That means you can expect to see me showing up at Metaxas' place in seventeen, eighteen days absolute.

"Something like that," I agreed.

"During which time you'll make it like crazy with Pulcheria."

"Naturally."

"Give her one for me," he said, and went into the room.

Downstairs, I slouched against a pillar and spent half an hour rechecking all of my comings and goings of this hectic night, to make sure I'd land in 1105 at a non-discontinuous point. The last thing I needed now was to miscalculate and show up there at a time prior to the whole Sauerabend caper, thereby finding a Metaxas to whom the entire thing was, well, Greek.

I did my calculations.

I shunted.

I wended my way once more to the lovely villa.

Everything had worked out perfectly. Metaxas embraced me in joy.

"The time-flow is intact again," he said. "I've been back from 1100 only a couple of hours, but that was enough to check up on things. Leo Ducas' wife is named Pulcheria. Someone named Angelus runs the tavern Sauerabend

owned. Nobody here remembers a thing about anything. You're safe."

"I can't tell you how much I—"

"Skip it, will you?"

"I suppose. Where's Sam?"

"Down the line. He had to go back to work. And I'm about to do the same," Metaxas said. "My layoff's over, and there's a tour waiting for me in the middle of December, 2059. So I'll be gone about two weeks, and then I'll be back here on—" He considered it.

"—on October 18, 1105. What about you?"

"I stay here until October 22," I said. "Then my alter ego will be finished with his post-tour layoff and will replace me here, while I go down the line to take out my next tour."

"Is that how you're going to work it? Turns?"

"It's the only way."

"You're probably right," said Metaxas, but I wasn't.

LXII

Metaxas took his leave, and I took a bath. And then, really relaxed for the first time in what seemed like several geological epochs, I contemplated my immediate future.

First, a nap. Then, a meal. And then, a journey into town to call on Pulcheria, who would be restored to her rightful place in the Ducas household, and unaware of the strange metamorphosis that had temporarily come over her destinies.

We'd make love, and I'd come back to the villa, and in the morning I'd go into town again, and afterward—

Then I stopped hatching further plans, because Sam appeared unexpectedly and smashed everything.

He was wearing a Byzantine cloak,

but it was just a hasty prop, for I could see his ordinary down-the-line clothes on underneath. He looked harried and upset.

"What the hell are you doing here?" I asked.

"A favor to you," he said.

"Huh?"

"I said I'm here as a favor to you. And I'm not going to stay long, because I don't want the Time Patrol after me too."

"Is the Time Patrol after me?"

"You bet your white ass it is!" he yelled. "Get your things together and clear out of here, fast! You've got to hide, maybe three, four thousand years back, somewhere. Hurry it up!"

He began collecting a few stray possessions of mine scattered about the room. I caught hold of him and said, "Will you tell me what's going on? Sit down and stop acting like a maniac. You come in here at a million kilometers and hour and—"

"All right," he said again. He closed his eyes a moment. "My now-time basis," he said hollowly, "is December 25, 2059. Merry Christmas. Several days ago on my time-level, your other self brought your current tour back from Byzantium. Including Sauerabend and all the rest of them. Do you know what happened to your other self the instant he arrived in 2059?"

"The Time Patrol arrested him?"

"Worse."

"What could be worse?"

"He vanished, Jud. He became a non-person. He ceased ever to have existed."

I had to laugh. "The cocksure bastard! I told him that I was the real one and that he was just some kind of phantom, but he wouldn't listen! Well, I can't say I'm sorry to see—"

"No, Jud," Sam said sadly. "He was

every bit as real as you, when he was back here up the line. And you're every bit as unreal as he is now."

"I don't understand."

"You're a nonperson, Jud, same as he is. You have retroactively ceased to exist. I'm sorry. You never happened. And it's our fault as much as yours. We moved so fast that we slipped up on one small detail."

He looked frighteningly somber. But how else are you supposed to look, when you come to tell somebody that he's not only dead but never was born?

"What happened, Sam? What detail?"

"It's like this, Jud. You know, when we took Sauerabend's gimmicked timer away, we got him another one. Metaxas keeps a few smuggled spares around—that tricky bastard has everything."

"So?"

"Its serial number, naturally, was different from the number of the timer Sauerabend started his tour with. Normally, nobody notices something like that, but when this tour checked back in, it just happened that the checkin man was a stickler for the rules, and he examined serial numbers. And saw there was a substitution, and yelled for the Patrol."

"Oh," I said weakly.

"They questioned Sauerabend," Sam said, "and of course he was cagy, more to protect himself than you. And since he couldn't give any explanation of the switch, the Patrol got authorization to run a recheck on the entire tour he had just taken."

"Oh—oh."

"They monitored it from every angle. They saw you leave your group, they saw Sauerabend skip out the moment you were gone, they saw you and me and Metaxas catch him and bring him back to that night in 1204."

"So all three of us are in trouble?"

Sam shook his head. "Metaxas has

pull. So have I. We wiggled out of it on a sympathy line, that we were just trying to help a buddy in trouble. It took all the strings we could pull. But we couldn't do a thing for you, Jud."

The Patrol is out for your head. They looked in on that little routine in 1204 by which you duplicated yourself, and they began to realize that you were guilty not only of negligence in letting Sauerabend get away from you in the first place, but also of various paradoxes caused in your unlawful attempts to correct the situation. The charges against you were so serious that we couldn't get them dropped, and we tried, man, we tried. The Patrol thereupon took action against you."

"What kind of action?" I asked in a dead man's voice.

"You were removed from your tour on that evening in 1204 two hours prior to your original shunt to 1105 for your tryst with Pulcheria. Another Courier replaced you in 1204; you were plucked from the time-flow and brought down the line to stand trial in 2059 for assorted timecrimes."

"Therefore—"

"Therefore," Sam swept on, "you never did slip away to 1105 to pay that call on Pulcheria. Your whole love affair with Pulcheria has become a nonevent, and if you were to visit her now, you'd find that she has no recollection of having slept with you. Next: since you didn't go to 1105, you obviously didn't return to 1204 and find Sauerabend missing, and anyway Sauerabend had never been part of your tour group. And thus there was no need for you to make that 56-second shunt up the line which created the duplication. Neither you nor Jud B ever came into being, since the existence of both of you dates from a point later than your visit to Pulcheria, and you never made that visit, having been plucked out of the time-flow before you got a

chance to do it. You and Jud B are non-persons and always have been. You happen to be protected by the Paradox of Transit Displacement, as long as you stay up the line; Jud B ceased to be protected the moment he returned to now-time, and disappeared irretrievably. Got that?"

Shivering, I said, "Sam, what's happening to that other Jud, the—the—the real Jud. The one they plucked, the one they've got down there in 2059?"

"He's in custody, awaiting trial on timecrime charges."

"What about me?"

"If the Patrol ever finds you, you'll be brought to now-time and thus automatically obliterated. But the Patrol doesn't know where you are. If you stay in Byzantium, sooner or later you'll be discovered, and that'll be the end for you. When I found all this out, I shot back here to warn you. Hide in prehistory. Get away into some period earlier than the founding of the old Greek Byzantium—earlier than 700 B.C., I guess. You can manage there. We'll bring you books, tools, whatever you need. There'll be people of some sort, nomads, maybe—anyway, company. You'll be like a god to them. They'll worship you, they'll bring you a woman a day. It's your only chance, Jud."

"I don't want to be a prehistoric god! I want to be able to go down the line again! and to see Pulcheria! And—"

"There's no chance of any of that," Sam said, and his words came down like the blade of a guillotine. "You don't exist. It's suicide for you ever to try to go down the line. And if you go anywhere near Pulcheria, the Patrol will catch you and take you down the line. Hide or die, Jud. Hide or die."

"But I'm real, Sam! I do exist!"

"Only the Jud Elliott who's currently in custody in 2059 exists. You're a

residual phenomenon, a paradox product, nothing more. I love you all the same, boy, and that's why I've risked my own black hide to help you, but you aren't real. Believe me. Believe me. You're your own ghost. Pack up and clear out!"

LXIII

I've been here for three and a half months, now. By the calendar I keep, the date is March 15, 3060 B.P. I'm living a thousand years before Christ, more or less.

It's not a bad life. The people here are subsistence farmers, maybe remnants of the old Hittite empire; the Greek colonists won't be getting here for another three centuries. I'm starting to learn the language; it's Indo-European and I pick it up fast. As Sam predicted, I'm a god. They wanted to kill me when I showed up, but I did a few tricks with my timer, shunting right before their eyes, and now they don't dare offend me. I try to be a kindly god, though. Right now I'm helping spring to arrive. I went down to the shore of what will someday be called the Bosphorus and delivered a long prayer, in English, for good weather. The locals loved it.

They give me all the women I want. The first night they gave me the chief's daughter, and since then I've rotated pretty well through the whole nubile population of the village. I imagine they'll want me to marry someone eventually, but I want to complete the inspection first. The women don't smell too good, but some of them are impressively passionate.

I'm terribly lonely.

Sam has been here three times, Metaxas twice. The others don't come. I don't blame them; the risks are great. My two loyal friends have brought me floaters, books, a laser, a big box of music cubes, and plenty of other things

that are going to perplex the tails off some archaeologists eventually.

I said to Sam, "Bring me Pulcheria, just for a visit."

"I can't," he said. And he's right. It would have to be a kidnapping, and there might be repercussions, leading to Time Patrol troubles for Sam and obliteration for me.

I miss Pulcheria ferociously. You know, I had sex with her only that one night, though it seems as if I knew her much better than that. I wish now that I'd had her in the tavern, while she was Pulcheria Photis, too.

My beloved. My wicked great-great-multi-great-grandmother. Never to see you again! Never to touch your smooth skin, your—no, I won't torture myself. I'll try to forget you. Hah!

I console myself, when not busy in my duties as a deity, by dictating my memoirs. Everything now is recorded, all the details of how I maneuvered myself into this terrible fix. A cautionary tale: from promising young man to absolute nonperson in sixty-two brief chapters. I'll keep on writing, too, now and then. I'll tell what it's like to be a Hittite god. Let's see, tomorrow we'll have the spring fertility festival, and the ten fairest maidens of the village will come to the god's house so that we—

Pulcheria!

Why am I here so far from you, Pulcheria?

I have too much time to think about you, here.

I also have too much time to think unpleasant thoughts about my ultimate fate. I doubt that the Time Patrol will find me here. But there's another possibility.

The Patrol knows that I'm hiding somewhere up the line, protected by displacement.

The Patrol wants to smoke me out

and abolish me, because I'm a filthy spawn of paradox.

And it's in the power of the Patrol to do it. Suppose they retroactively discharge Judd Elliott from the Time Service prior to the time he set out on his ill-starred last trip? If Jud Elliott never ever got to Byzantium that time at all, the probability of my existence reaches the zero point, and I no longer am protected by the Paradox of Transit Displacement. The law of lesser paradoxes prevails. Out I go—poof!

I know why they haven't done that to me yet. It's because that other Jud, God bless him, is standing trial for timecrime down the line, and they can't retroactively pluck him until they've found him guilty. They have to complete the trial. If he's found guilty, I guess they'll take some action of that sort. But court procedures are slow. Jud will stall. Sam's told him I'm here and have to be protected. It might be months, years, who knows? He's on his now-time basis, I'm on mine, and we move forward into our futures together, day by day, and so far I'm still here.

Lonely. Heartsick.

Dreaming of my forever lost Pulcheria.

Maybe they'll never take action against me.

Or maybe they'll end me tomorrow.

Who knows? There are moments when I don't even care. There's one comforting thing, at least. It'll be the most painless of deaths. Not even a flicker of pain. I'll simply go wherever the flame of the candle goes when it's snuffed. It could happen at any time, and meanwhile I live from hour to hour, playing god, listening to Bach, indulging in floaters, dictating my memoirs, and waiting for the end. Why, it could even come right in the middle of a sentence, and I'd

—Robert Silverberg

LOST TREASURE

WHAT they'll say on Earth when we bring all *this* back!" Gareth Crane exulted. "The greatest Martian archeological find on record—a treasure worth millions!"

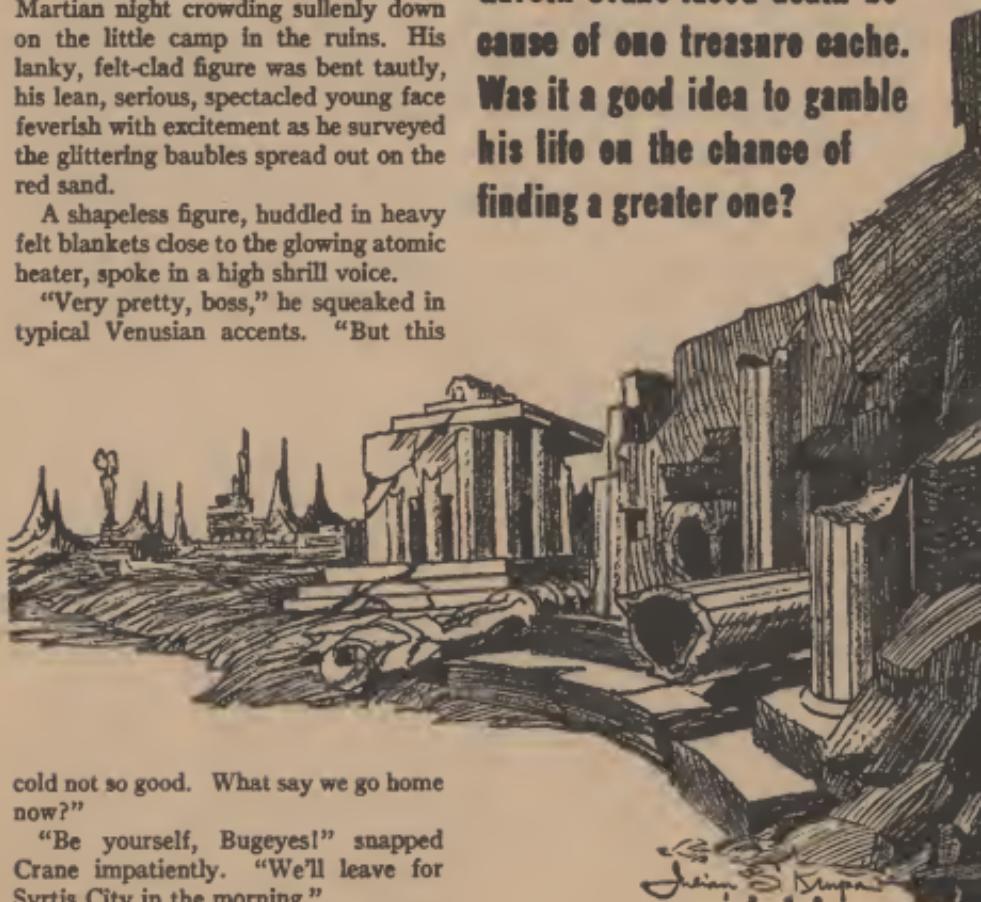
In his excitement, he did not feel the bone-penetrating chill of the bitter Martian night crowding sullenly down on the little camp in the ruins. His lanky, felt-clad figure was bent tautly, his lean, serious, spectacled young face feverish with excitement as he surveyed the glittering baubles spread out on the red sand.

A shapeless figure, huddled in heavy felt blankets close to the glowing atomic heater, spoke in a high shrill voice.

"Very pretty, boss," he squeaked in typical Venusian accents. "But this

BY
**EDMOND
HAMILTON**

Gareth Crane faced death because of one treasure cache. Was it a good idea to gamble his life on the chance of finding a greater one?



cold not so good. What say we go home now?"

"Be yourself, Bugeyes!" snapped Crane impatiently. "We'll leave for Syrtis City in the morning."

"One more night in this desert, and poor Bugeyes freeze hard like board,"

Julian S. Bergman



groaned the muffled figure. "Was big damned fool to leave Venus. Was much bigger damned fool to come to this world, which has remarkable absence of water, warmth and comfort."

And the shivering Venusian crouched so close to the glowing heater that the felt blankets began to scorch and had to be thrown hastily aside.

Bugeyes, as Crane had christened the amphibious swampman he had picked up as a servant on Venus, was scaled and gray and manlike, with a round head and the bulging, faceted eyes that had led to his nickname. He shivered violently, and rewrapped his blankets.

"Unlucky day when Bugeyes listen to Earthman's blandishings and sign up for servant," he moaned. "Now he doomed to die horrible death here in desert of cold. Master care nothing."

Crane paid no attention. The lanky young archeologist was feasting his gaze on the glistening objects spread on the sand in the glow of the heater.

THEY were brilliant gems, in antique Martian settings. There were sun-stones from the polar hills of Mars, blue gems whose interior content of disintegrating radioactive elements gave them their unearthly scintillation; Martian emeralds like blazing green eyes; moon-jewels from Saturn's satellites, throbbing living lights; great purple pearls from under the sea of Neptune; polaroid rock-crystals from the wild asteroids; and wicked, smoky fire-stones from Jupiter.

The stones, some faceted and others cut in curious concave cabochon* fashion, were set in beautifully worked mountings of platinum, silver and electrum. The mountings alone were very

valuable. But the stones, in antiquarian value alone, were many times more so.

For this was the legended jewel hoard of Kau-ta-lah, last of the great Martian kings of Rylik—those rulers of long ago whose mighty civilization had risen and waned at a time when Earth was still steaming jungle. The vague black ruins here in the desert had once been the magnificent capital of Rylik. Here for millenniums the hoard of the great kings had lain hidden, and here Gareth Crane had found it.

Yet though Crane was an ardent planetary archeologist, his thoughts were occupied not so much with the scholarly importance of his find as with its monetary value.

"These jewels are worth at least ten millions!" he exulted. "What that money will mean to the Institute!"

"Fail to see why boss get excited, when Institute of Planetary Science get the money," complained Bugeyes.

"You dope, the Institute needs that money for its campaign against interplanetary plagues," Crane retorted. "To keep people like you and me from dying of Martian fever or Jovian croup."

Crane's serious eyes kindled as he pictured the enthusiasm of the Institute officials when he brought them back this treasure—a treasure that would give them funds for their desperately needed campaign to stamp out the interplanetary microbial diseases which had presented a grave problem ever since space travel had begun.

It was that need of the Institute which had spurred Crane in his secret search for the lost treasure of the ancient Martian king, Kau-ta-lah. Following archeological clues from ruin to lonely ruin across the desert, he had at last located the legended hoard so many had sought.

* This is a carbuncle-shaped precious stone, but not faceted. The term occurs in the French phrase *en cabochon*.—Ed.

"Hear rocket-car approaching damn fast!" said Bugeyes suddenly, standing up. "From west, I think."

Crane jumped up. He too soon heard the dim, drumming drone of rocket tubes from the starlit deserts westward.

"Who the devil would be coming to these lonesome ruins?" he exclaimed, his lean brown face stiffening.

He felt vague alarm. The waterless Martian desert, outside the few interplanetary colonial cities, was a No Man's Land extending beyond planetary law. Criminals often fled into it, though most of them soon died horribly of thirst or were forced to return.

"Bugeyes, get our stuff into the rocket car—we're not waiting till morning to leave!" Crane declared. "Hurry!"

As the Venusian hurried to obey, striking their felt tent and lugging it into the tubular rocket car nearby, Crane snatched up his jewels and stuffed them into his inside pockets.

The drone of approaching rockets was louder. At this moment, Deimos burst above the western horizon with theatrically spectacular effect. The brilliant rays of the nearer moon illuminated the whole scene.*

The climbing moon showed the somber, towering black time-eaten stones around them, the vague desert stretching to the horizons. And it showed also a tubular rocket car plunging toward them across the silvered sands, its stern rocket tubes spouting steady flame.

The writhing vehicle stopped nearby

* Deimos, the nearer moon of Mars' peculiar and diminutive pair of satellites, would appear to move very swiftly across the heavens, but not as a great globe such as our own Luna presents. It would be almost star-like, although of great brilliance, due to the thin Martian atmosphere, and its great clarity, which would allow the rays to reach the surface unimpeded. It is certain that the spectacle is a beautiful one and the light shed by it quite perceptible.—Ed.

and the roar of its tubes died. Three people in heavy felt suits emerged.

Crane eyed them as they came into the flaring glow of his atomic heater. The leader was a small figure who threw back the felt hood of the suit to reveal shining, bobbed blond hair.

"A girl!" Crane muttered. "What the devil—"

"Earth female here most unusual," squeaked Bugeyes, staring blankly. "Maybe boss forget a wife somewhere, and she follow?"

CRANE paid him no attention. The girl advanced to him, her feet dragging in the lead-soled gravity shoes.

Her small, firm-chinned white face had no friendliness in it, and her clear blue eyes were clouded with suspicion as she stared at the lanky young archeologist and his scaled gray servant.

"Who are you?" she demanded.

"Gareth Crane's the name," answered the wondering young archeologist. "And this is my servant, Miss—"

"Jean Edwards," she finished curtly for him. "These are my guides—Jay Sweigert and Kaubos."

Crane's eyes swept the two men curiously. Sweigert was an Earthman, grossly fat, with pendulous jowls that gave him a pseudo-jovial expression belied by his fishy eyes.

Kaubos was a squat green Jovian with the enormously wide shoulders and hollow dark eyes and queer, fingerless hands of his race. He wore very thick-soled gravity-shoes on his toeless feet.

"Two nice-looking gentlemen, I not think," muttered Bugeyes hoarsely behind Crane. "Which one you think ugliest, boss?"

"Shut up," Crane ordered.

Jean Edwards broke in then.

"Are you a prospector?" she demanded directly.

"Nope — an archeologist, from the

staff of the Institute of Planetary Science," Crane answered.

The reaction to his statement was surprising. The girl's eyes flashed, and from the two men behind her came exclamations.

"An archeologist?" wheezed Sweigert. "That's interesting—that's mighty interesting."

Kaubos, the Jovian, had put his green hand on the butt of an atom-pistol at his belt. Crane felt a sudden tension.

Jean Edwards' blue eyes were stormy. "You followed my father's translation clues to these ruins of Rylik!" she accused Crane hotly. "You're here after the jewel hoard of Kau-ta-lah!"

Crane stiffened. The jewels! He felt the cold breath of danger. Yet he answered with assumed perplexity.

"The hoard of Kau-ta-lah? Do you mean to tell me you believe in that old treasure hunters' tale?"

"I know that hoard exists," Jean Edwards retorted. "My father proved it, by deciphering the Kos inscriptions."

"Your father?" Crane repeated, wrinkling his brow.

"He's Doctor Elver Edwards," the girl answered, and added defiantly, "the greatest planetary archeologist alive."

Crane uttered a whistle of surprise. "Edwards, the Earth University man who was imprisoned for embezzling university funds?"

Jean's blue eyes hardened. "Yes. And while he is in prison, you get hold of his Kos transcriptions, find the clue to Kau-ta-lah's hoard, and come here after it!"

"Maybe they've found it, too," wheezed Jay Sweigert. The fat Earthman's fishy eyes were watching Crane closely.

"Miss Edwards, I never even heard of your father's Kos work," Crane as-

sured the girl earnestly, and truthfully. He added, more equivocally:

"And I thought everyone had given up belief in Kau-ta-lah's treasure."

"Have you or have you not been hunting for that jewel hoard here in Rylik?" Jean demanded pointblank.

Crane hesitated. But only for an instant. He hated lying, but a lie was needed here if he was to get that fortune in jewels safely to the Planetary Institute that so direly needed it.

"I've no interest in crazy treasure tales," he answered calmly. "I've been here in Rylik studying to compose a list of the ancient kings' names, that's all. I'm through, and we were leaving."

JEAN EDWARDS' accusing gaze became less hostile.

"If that's so"—she hesitated—"I'm sorry for what I said."

"Come along, Bugeyes—time we were getting back to Syrtis City," Crane told the popeyed Venusian.

Sweigert's hand flashed an atom-pistol and aimed it at Crane's breast! The fat Earthman pointed with his other hand and yelled,

"He's lyin', Miss Edwards — he's found the jewels! Look at that sand!"

Crane glanced back, startled. Then he cursed inwardly at his own stupidity.

In the sand where he had been sitting examining the hoard, was an unmistakably clear impression of the jewels.

"See—he's had jewels on that sand, just a minute ago!" wheezed Sweigert. "Kaubos, keep them covered!"

The atom-gun of the squat green Jovian was already out, leveled at Crane and his servant.

"Most unhealthy fix, this," squeaked Bugeyes to his master. "Respectfully suggest we beat it damned fast."

"No chance now—don't start anything or they'll blast us," Crane said.

He was furious with himself. Why in the name of ten thousand devils had he been so asinine about leaving that clue? He could have wiped it out with his foot when the rocket ship first hove into sight.

Jean's blue eyes flamed. "And your lies nearly tricked me!" she flared at Crane. "You've found the hoard, through my father's work, and meant to steal it!"

Crane answered levelly, "I told you that I had never heard of your father's work, and that's the truth."

"Search them, Kaubos," ordered Sweigert.

The Jovian's flipperlike hands explored the Venusian servant's pockets first. Bugeyes emitted a shrill titter.

"Am slightly ticklesome," he apologized.

Kaubos passed on to Crane. In a minute he was drawing out the mass of jewels.

The brilliant gems spilled the light of flying Deimos in whirling scintillations as they caught the moon. Like muffled pyres of radiance, they burned in the Jovian's green hands.

Hoard of Kau-ta-lah! Legended jewels of the ancient Martian king that so many dreamers had sought and failed to find! Gathered long ago from far worlds by the space-venturing Martians of a forgotten civilization—and now about to change hands once more.

"They're worth millions!" choked Kaubos hoarsely, hollow eyes exultant. "Sweigert, we're rich—we're millionaires!"

Jean Edwards, startled by the Jovian's cry, raised her eyes from her fascinated inspection of the glittering hoard.

"*You* millionaires?" she exclaimed. "You forget that you men are only my guides. I agreed to pay you a tenth of what we found—no more. These

jewels belong rightfully to my father!"

Jay Sweigert laughed wheezily, as though appreciating a funny story.

"You didn't really believe we was fools enough to take just a tenth when we could have all, did you, Miss?" he chuckled.

Jean's blue eyes widened, stunned. And Crane laughed harshly.

"So—the crooks you hired are doublecrossing you?" he rasped to the girl. "It's just what you deserve."

"Humbly beg to submit that our own necks are in precarious situation," whispered Bugeyes hastily. "Fear unhandsome fat gentlemen about to take drastic measures."

In fact, Jay Sweigert was raising a trifle the atom-pistol in his fat hand. The obese Earthman grinned at Crane and his scared Venusian servant and the stunned, unbelieving girl.

"Guess we won't need you any longer, Miss," mocked Sweigert, "nor these two lads, either. Sorry to have to do this, but—"

"Existence of innocent Venusian boy about to be terminated, boss!" squeaked Bugeyes in panic.

"Wait, Sweigert!" Crane said quickly. "Before you gun us down—can't we *buy* our lives from you?"

SWEIGERT paused, his fishy eyes narrowing.

"Why, I'm a reasonable man, always willing to do business in a fair and reasonable way," he wheezed. "Only I don't see just what you can offer for your lives, that would interest a man who owns half of those little trinkets already."

And he nodded toward the heap of blazing jewels that the Jovian was stuffing into a small sack.

Crane's brown face was a hard mask behind which his thoughts were seething. That treasure had to go to the In-

stitute—and his only hope of saving it, and their lives as well, was to stall for time. He had a crazy plan in mind, one that would at least give him a little time.

"Sweigert, what if I could lead you to a treasure greater than that jewel hoard?" he asked. "Would you let us go then?"

"A treasure greater than Kau-ta-lah's hoard?" the obese Earthman wheezed. "What kind of fairy tale is this, Crane?"

"There's a clue in these ruins to a far greater treasure in the ruined city of Ushtu, north of here," Crane explained confidentially. "It's in an inscription here that I came upon. I was on my way to Ushtu to find that greater treasure, when you came. If I translated the inscription and helped you find the Ushtu treasure, would you free us?"

Sweigert paused, considering. And Kaubos, the Jovian, burst in with thick-voiced dissuasion.

"He's lying, Jay—playing for time! He'll read some phony directions from that inscription, and we won't know whether his translation's true or not."

BUT Sweigert's greed-lit eyes had a cunning expression in them.

"There's a way we can check on Crane," he wheezed. "Miss Edwards here knows Martian hieroglyphics, remember. You said your father taught you how to translate it—didn't you, Miss Edwards?"

Jean, recovered a little from her amazement, flared at the fat criminal.

"I'll do nothing to help you!"

"I think you will," purred Sweigert. "Crane, you lead the way to that there inscription you spoke of. But—no tricks!"

Crane nodded, and started through the moonlit ruins, with Bugeyes and Jean beside him, and Sweigert and the

Jovian following with drawn atom-pistols.

About them towered the remnants of legended Rylik, black and shadowy in the streaming silver light. Shapeless masses of worn stones they were, half drifted over by the desert sands, wrecks of what had once been the mighty Martian capital of the equatorial kings.

Long and long ago, three hundred thousand years before ever the first Earthman had come to Mars, the planet had been dying. The arid stretches of the desiccated world were on the increase, the water-vines that were almost the only source of moisture were perishing. It was in that twilight of a dying world that Kau-ta-lah had reigned here.

Crane's nerves, tensed by peril, felt the deathly spell of this dead city as he marched on in the moonlight. But at least, while they were alive, there was a faint shadow of hope.

They reached a broken wall beyond which loomed a grotesque statue, many times life-size, a stone figure gnawed by the ages.

"This is a statue of Kau-ta-lah himself," Crane said earnestly. "See the inscription at its base."

The stone figure was indeed that of the Martian king of long ago, a huge-chested, bald, stilt-limbed figure in ceremonial trappings and diadem. Upon the sides of the pedestal were scenes of queer Martian space ships of that forgotten era, bringing gems and treasures from far planets, offering them to the king.

But on the front of Kau-ta-lah's pedestal was a long inscription in the crescent-shaped characters of ancient Martian hieroglyphics.

Bugeyes whispered to Crane, "Boss, this I not like. If you are stalling for time, please do not. The suspense is killing me!"

"Don't worry," Crane whispered

back with a mirthless grin. "There's treasure here, all right. I'm not sticking out my neck just for the hell of it."

Then aloud: "I'll translate that for you," Crane said, but Sweigert stopped him.

"No, wait! Miss Edwards, you make a *written* translation of that first. Then I'll check Crane's translation against it."

"I won't do it!" Jean flamed, defiant.

"Do it, Jean," Crane said anxiously. "It's the only chance we've got to get out of this mess alive."

"He's right, Miss Edwards," purred the obese crook.

Reluctantly, Jean took out pad and pencil and began writing, gazing at the inscription as Kaubos played a fluoric spotlight on the worn characters.

Finally she handed the written translation of the inscription to Sweigert. The obese Earthman looked at Crane.

"Now start translating aloud," he wheezed. "If your version checks with Miss Edwards', I'll know you're reading it right. If it doesn't, one of you has tried to fool me."

Crane read the message of the hieroglyphics beneath the towering grotesque statue, in a slow voice.

Kau-ta-lah, Son of the Two Moons, King of Rylik, to all beholders:

I was a great king. I reigned in Rylik, where all my forefathers had reigned before me. I repelled the unhuman Wallus of the wastes. I sent ships to other worlds, as my fathers had done, and they brought back strange beasts and slaves and treasures such as are not known upon this world.

Yet all the treasures I have gathered together are of no worth beside the Greatest Treasure that is owned by the kings of the city Ushtu, and is boarded by them beneath their palace. Many times did I attack their city and seek to wrest the Greatest Treasure from them, yet never could I do so.

And now the people of Rylik are dying as the water-vines fail us, and my space-captains have found no world on which we could live long, and the glory of Rylik is fading and falling. And in times to come, there will be nothing of great Rylik but an echoing name and a whisper of glory that has passed away forever and ever.

THE solemn words resounded with deep impressiveness — this bitter last message of a great Martian king, who saw his people and kingdom dying as the last frail water source perished.

Jay Sweigert had been reading from the written translation Jean had made, as Crane spoke. Now Sweigert looked up.

"Your reading checks with hers, Crane," he admitted. There was flaring greed in his fishy eyes. "So there is an even greater treasure than the jewels, buried under the ruins of Ushtu!"

"The Greatest Treasure?" repeated Kaubos incredulously. "What could be a greater treasure than these jewels, Jay?"

"Maybe that Greatest Treasure will be gems like no one ever heard of before," Sweigert muttered. "Maybe it's a scientific secret of some kind that enabled the armies of Ushtu to beat off the attacks of these people of Rylik. Whatever it is, that Greatest Treasure is something colossally valuable if it makes this jewel hoard insignificant, as Kau-ta-lah said."

"Yes, but they tell queer stories about those Ushtu ruins," Kaubos added uneasily. "People have vanished there — natives here are afraid to go near them —"

Sweigert's jowled fat face was scoffing. "Superstitions don't bother *me*! We're going to Ushtu — won't take but a few hours to get there in our rocket

car. Crane, can you locate the palace there?"

Crane nodded hesitantly. "I think so. The whole place is a ruin, of course, like this—but the palace site shouldn't be hard to find."

"Come along, then," Sweigert ordered. "The sooner Kaubos and I get that Greatest Treasure, the sooner you'll go free."

He chuckled, as he promised that. And Bugeyes whispered distrustfully to Crane,

"Fear fat Earthman plans to cross double again, once he gets Ushtu treasure. He laughs most unjoyful, very."

"While there's life, there's hope," Crane muttered doggedly. "And the Institute has *got* to get those jewels we found!"

They entered the rocket car. Kaubos shouldered forward to take the controls. Crane, Jean and the Venusian settled in swivel chairs behind the Jovian, at an order from Sweigert. The obese Earthman took the rear chair, his atom-pistol lazily balanced.

The rocket tubes at the back broke into a drumming drone. The car lurched forward, running smoothly over the sands on its low, flat, broad wheels, its jointed tubular body giving creakingly to accommodate itself to the inequalities of sand ridges and dunes.

Crane looked out. Phobos had risen in the starred heavens as Deimos hurtled toward the east. The two brilliant moons cast queer forked shadows beside the low car as it sped northward.

Rylik's wrecked stones receded from sight behind them. The vast, lonely moonlit Martian desert stretched away, brooding wastes tenanted only by sand and silence. Here and there were a few of the now rare water-vines, queer leafless plants that could draw moisture from far beneath the surface by capillary attraction. The vines had been

the only source of water for the native Martian peoples long ago, until the plants too had withered away.

Bugeyes shivered. "Unpleasant to die on dry world like this, without even spot of water to look at," he murmured.

"And when we're dead, Sweigert will have the jewels that would have bought my father's freedom," Jean whispered.

Crane stared at her. "That's why you wanted the jewels so badly? To get your father out of prison, by making restitution of the money he embezzled?"

"My father never embezzled that money, really," Jean answered dully. "He was on Saturn, on one of his archeological expeditions, and a dreadful famine was killing the Saturnian natives in that region. He took funds of his university to relieve the famine. Enemies charged him with theft, and he was sentenced to prison. I hoped that a small part of those jewels would make restitution, and free him."

CRANE impulsively squeezed her hand. "I'm sorry, Jean—I didn't know."

The rocket car sped northward for three hours. Deimos had set, by the time they sighted the ruined city of Ushtu.

Ushtu, once as great a metropolis as Rylik, was now a similar wreck of shattered stone and drifting sands. Lonely, desolate, it sat gloomily in the moonlight, brooding on past glories.

Kaubos stopped the car, near the edge of the ruins. They got out, with Sweigert's atom-gun still covering the three.

"Now, Mr. Crane, find the palace here for us," Sweigert wheezed. "Under the palace is that Greatest Treasure, if the inscription back at Rylik was right."

Crane stared doubtfully through the

chill darkness at the bewildering tangle of broken stone wrecks.

"According to plans of Ushtu I've seen, the palace of the kings was near the western edge of the city," he said.

"Lead the way, then," ordered the obese criminal. "And *don't* try dodging out of sight. I can shoot, in case you're doubtful."

"This place nothing but dry sand and busted stones like other," squeaked Bugeyes distastefully as they entered the ruins. "Understatement, to call this one hell of a world."

"I don't like these ruins, Jay," Kaubos the Jovian was muttering behind them. "What with all the stories you hear about Ushtu, it gives me the creeps."

Sweigert's wheezy laugh chuckled. "When we lift the treasure here, you'll forget your creeps quick enough."

Crane's eyes searched the moonlit masses of broken stone. He identified the broad avenue that the maps of the dead city had called the "Way of Kings." At its end should be the palace—

And when they reached the palace, and the Greatest Treasure, what then? Time was running out fast, Crane knew. The brief respite his stratagem had gained for them was nearly ended.

Down the Way of Kings toward the west the strange little party went, with the bright disk of Phobos hanging low in the sky ahead to light their way. Stumbling over the broken paving, detouring around masses of stonework that had tumbled from the sides, they approached a massive broken-walled ruin at the avenue's end.

Palace of the kings of Ushtu, those long-dead Martian lords whose Greatest Treasure even great Kau-ta-lah had vainly coveted!

"There *is* something terrifying about this place," Jean Edwards said in a low

voice to Crane. "No wonder people shun it!"

They passed through an arched opening into what had been once a great court of the palace. Broken columns and statues of grotesque Martians of old lay scattered about on the flagging.

"Flash your light on those inscriptions," Crane told the Jovian. "There must be underground chambers beneath the palace, and we've got to find the entrance to them."

Kaubos directed his fluoric beam at the carven hieroglyphics Crane pointed out. Crane slowly translated aloud.

"Lords of Ushtu, owners of the Greatest Treasure, suzerains of the deserts north and south—behold our glory!"

"Behold our glory!" repeated Jean, her wide eyes sweeping the moonlit desolation of ruins about them, amid which the boasting words ironically echoed.

"It doesn't tell us anything," Crane muttered. "We must try to find a way into the underground chambers."

Crane had already noticed, at a corner of the ruined court, a small archway whose narrow stairs led down into darkness. But he had said nothing of it. He meant to draw out this search for the Greatest Treasure as long as possible, hoping for a break.

BUT Bugeyes upset his plan. The Venusian, who had been glancing around with his popping optics, suddenly pointed.

"Boss, there is stairs going down," he squeaked helpfully.

Crane could have kicked the simple-minded swampman where it would do the most good. But he pretended surprise.

"So there is. That may be the way down."

"Go ahead with the lamp, Kaubos," ordered Jay Sweigert. "I'll keep be-

hind these three to make sure they act right."

They started down the stairs, the Jovian's reddish beam flashing ahead. Up to meet them from the unguessable depths came a dank, musty odor that somehow was startling.

Crane knew the origin of that odor. He had never been here before, but he knew that smell. And his heart began to pound.

The stairs dropped downward further, and ended in a short stone passage that ran straight ahead. They moved along it, with Kaubos lighting the way. The passage ended in an open doorway.

Beyond that door lay a buried octagonal chamber two hundred feet across. The red beam flashed into it, and then the Jovian stopped, stupefied by what he saw.

"Why, look at *that!*" he husked amazedly.

The buried chamber contained a bubbling, fountaining pool of water—water that gushed up from depths far beneath, that filled all the chamber except a narrow stone ledge around it.

"That's the first time I ever saw that much water here on Mars!" exclaimed the astonished Jovian.

Bugeyes' protruding optics glistened. The amphibious Venusian squeaked,

"That water look like home, boss!"

Sweigert and Jean Edwards also were showing their surprise. Surface water was almost unknown on Mars; the water-vines that drew moisture from underground were the only source on this dying world.

But Sweigert's attention was not long to be distracted from his greed. His fishy eyes flashed cunningly.

"This must be where the treasure's hidden!" he exclaimed. "Those old Ushtu kings were clever—they sunk their treasure down here in the water,

where it couldn't even be seen. Go ahead, Kaubos—we'll have a look."

The Jovian led the way forward into the chamber. They stood on the narrow stone ledge that surrounded the bubbling pool.

To their left, there stood on the ledge a towering metal statue of an ancient Martian, stilt-limbed, huge-chested, with glaring jeweled eyes and a great mace uplifted in metal hands.

"See—that statue's some kind of symbolic guard over this place!" wheezed Sweigert excitedly. "And that means—"

AT that moment came an appalling interruption. There was a shifting of the stone under their feet, a creaking as of rusty metal levers in operation.

Crash! With thunderous reverberation, a solid block of stone dropped to close the door through which they had entered.

"It's a trap of some kind, operated automatically!" Kaubos yelled in panic. "We're prisoners in here—"

"Shut up!" ordered Sweigert. "Crane, try to get that door open."

Crane, as stunned as the others by the sudden springing of this ancient trap, went to the door. One glance showed him it was useless. That solid block of stone could not be raised.

"It can only be opened by a control from outside," the young archeologist said hoarsely. "We're trapped!"

"Listen—what's that?" cried Sweigert.

He and Kaubos flashed their lamp beams around. Then, for an instant, all stood frozen by sheer horror.

The metal guardian statue on the ledge was *moving*. It was striding toward them with slow, clanking steps, jeweled eyes glaring, great mace still raised above its head.

"It's *alive!*!" the Jovian choked, staring wildly.

"No—it's just part of the trap—a mechanism of some kind automatically operated!" Crane yelled. "Get out of its way!"

But Kaubos seemed hypnotized by the oncoming, clanking figure. The metal statue loomed over him—

The mace flashed down, as though the thing had in it some control operated by its proximity to any living being. Straight down on the green head of the Jovian fell the mighty mace.

Jean screamed as Kaubos slumped to the floor, his brains crushed out. The statue rustily raised the mace, was coming on toward them—

"Run, you two!" Crane cried to Jean and Bugeyes. "Around the ledge away from it—don't let it catch up to us!"

But the ledge around the bubbling pool was only a few feet wide. There was no chance of evading the stalking metal figure on it.

Sweigert was firing his atom-pistol wildly at the striding statue. But the steady blast of atomic fire splashed harmlessly off the invulnerable metal. With a yell of terror, Sweigert flung away the exhausted pistol and stumbled forward with the others.

They retreated around the narrow ledge, while the metal guardian stalked relentlessly after them. The only light was the beam of the Jovian's fluoric lamp, which Crane had snatched up.

A complete circuit of the chamber they made—and still the metal horror followed them. It did not hurry; they could keep ahead of it by a fast walk. But it showed no signs of faltering or stopping, even after it had followed them around the pool for a score of times.

"Boss, how long before that thing gets tired?" panted the Venusian. "Bugeyes not built for walking."

"We can't—get away from—it," gasped Jay Sweigert, his fat face livid with terror. "It'll get us in time—"

In fact, the metal automaton showed every sign of stalking around the narrow ledge until doomsday. Like a remorseless, mindless avenger, it came on with uplifted mace and sightless jeweled eyes.

Crane cursed himself for not foreseeing that the ancient Ushtu kings would have set some such guard here. This metal automaton was doubtless actuated and set into motion by the same cunning mechanism which had closed the door to trap anyone who entered the place. . . .

BUGEYES was faltering, Sweigert gasping pitifully as he staggered on. It seemed hours that they had fled thus around the bubbling, chuckling pool.

"We can't keep this up much longer!" Crane exclaimed, panting. "Our only chance is to get down into the pool, and hang onto its edge till that thing's mechanism runs down and stops."

"Now you talking, boss!" exclaimed Bugeyes. "Little swim freshen me up, very!"

Hastily, they slid down into the bubbling waters. Their feet touched no bottom—Crane had already guessed that the pool was almost bottomless, gushing up from far depths below.

But they managed to keep afloat by clinging to the stone edge of the ledge. Jean turned a white face toward him with a brave smile. Sweigert's fishy eyes were dilated, and he was breathing in great sobs as he clung to his hold.

But Bugeyes, with a cry of pleasure, had shed his felt suit and was diving in and out of the water with manifest happiness, his protruding eyes glistening as he broke surface.

"Hot dog!" the Venusian squeaked. "This more like it! If Bugeyes got to die, he wants to die in native water!"

Sweigert was staring elsewhere. "Look—look at that metal monster!" he gasped. "It won't stop—it won't never stop!"

With clanking, reverberating strides, the automaton was stalking on and on around the ledge with upraised mace.

Each time it passed just above them, its feet grinding on the stones, Jean flinched back. Crane put his arm around her shoulders, his other hand keeping the fluoric lamp up as he held on.

The bubbling water's icy cold penetrated their limbs. The monster showed no sign whatever of stopping. Crane tried desperately to evolve some scheme of wrecking the thing, but without avail. What could harm a monstrosity like that?

SWEIGERT had become silent. Crane turned, found that the fat criminal had slipped beneath the surface.

"Bugeyes, Sweigert has sunk!" Crane yelled.

"I go after him, boss!" the Venusian cried.

The scaled, gray amphibious servant dived hastily down into the waters. Long moments elapsed. Then Bugeyes reappeared, with a mass of brilliant jewels in his hands.

"I find fat man down there, boss," he chortled, "and get jewels out of his suit before he sink further!"

"You let him drown?" Crane accused, and the Venusian stared blankly.

"Sure, boss—but I get jewels. That what you wanted, isn't it?"

Crane's lips tightened. He had no reason to feel pity for Sweigert—but he had meant for Bugeyes to save the fat criminal, nevertheless. And Bugeyes had misunderstood completely.

"Too late to help it now," he muttered to Jean. He stowed the jewels into his own suit. "We've got the board of Kau-ta-lah back—not that it looks as if we'll ever get out with it."

"I—I can't hold on much longer," Jean whispered. "Let me sink, when the time comes. I don't want to drag *you* down."

"Hell, there must be some way out of this devil-trap!" Crane cried.

The chuckling bubble of the waters around him was sardonic in its answering laughter. The metal automaton still strode endlessly around and around the nightmare chamber.

But the bubbling chuckle of the waters insinuated an idea in Crane's brain. He maneuvered around toward the Venusian.

"Bugeyes, there may be a way out of here for *you*, at least!" he exclaimed. "The bubbles in this water—they're air, which means the underground spring that feeds this pool has a connection through some crevice or cleft with the upper air. If you could swim down and find such a connection, you could possibly win clear."

Bugeyes looked anxious. "No, boss—won't go and leave you here."

"You've got to—it's our only chance!" Crane insisted. "For if you can get out and come back to the outside of that door, it's just possible that you can set us free. I believe that the door opens when anyone starts down that stairs toward it—otherwise, it wouldn't have been open when we came down to this hellish trap."

Bugeyes looked doubtful still, but finally assented.

"I try it then, boss. Swim way down and look for opening. If find one, good! If not, my number damned well up."

The amphibious servant breathed deeply for several moments, then with a darting movement dived down into

the bubbling interior.

"It's an impossibility," Jean murmured. "Nobody could swim down to such depths as that and find a way out."

"Bugeyes may be able to," Crane muttered, hoping against hope. "Those Venusians can stay underwater a tremendously long time."

MINUTES passed, but nothing changed. Bugeyes didn't reappear. The automaton clanked relentlessly on around the chamber.

Crane listened tensely for a step outside the stone-sealed door of the chamber. But there was no such sound. His faint hopes waned. Despair darkened in his brain, as he was aware that Jean's frozen hands could no longer cling to the stone ledge.

He was holding her up by his own strength. But his energy was running out fast. Better to let go and sink together into the numbing depths, he thought, than prolong the useless struggle.

He chuckled harshly. "Drowned on Mars! At least, it's a crazily improbable way to end up. But I wish—"

A clash of stone and metal, a flood of faint light pouring down into the chamber! The block in the door was slowly *rising!*

"By heaven, Bugeyes got through!" Crane yelled. "Jean, look—"

The door was open. And the metal automaton had halted in its former position to the left of the opening. Not only halted, but it had resumed its age-old post!

The staggering, dripping, shivering figure of a scratched, woebegone Venusian appeared outside the door.

"Stay out there, Bugeyes—don't enter or you'll start the automaton moving again!" Crane yelled. "We're coming out!"

He clambered up with Jean, dragging

the girl onto the ledge. Two quick strides—and they were out of the chamber, on the stairway, safely escaped from the ancient treasure trap of Ushtu!

As Crane worked to revive the girl, Bugeyes chattered,

"Between ourselves, boss, that one hell of a swim! Bugeyes get down to the little underground river far below, carried away on it, swim back up it, find crevice and get up through that crevice to the ground, outside this cursed city. Bugeyes come back here—"

"And when you started down the stairs here, the door automatically opened, as I'd thought it would!" Crane cried. "And that metal monster went back to its place."

He chafed the girl's wrists. "Jean, we're safe!"

She clung to him, shuddering from the reaction.

"We've got the jewels, too," Crane exulted.

"*You* have them," she answered. "You found them."

Crane shook his head. "The Institute can spare enough of them to make restitution and free your father, Jean. We're partners in this. Partners—I like the sound of it, Jean!"

"If boss can spare time from romancing," broke in Bugeyes, "what about Greatest Treasure here in Ushtu? We get that too?"

"Yes," Jean remembered, "is the Greatest Treasure down in that pool somewhere, as Sweigert thought?"

Crane grinned haggardly. "Your father may have taught you how to read hieroglyphics, Jean, but you don't know much about Martian archeology. No more than Sweigert or Kaubos knew."

"What do you mean?" she asked puzzledly. "There is a Greatest Treasure, isn't there?"

Crane nodded. He pointed through the open door at the bubbling pool.

"There it is."

"You mean—the pool itself?" she exclaimed.

"Yes," he said. "What was the rarest, the most valuable, the most sought after thing on dying, drying Mars? *Water!* Water that was so scarce that it was always referred to as the Greatest Treasure. Water so valuable that the Ushtu kings guarded their fountain with that hellish mechanical trap.

"I knew as much," Crane grinned, "when I translated the inscription, of course—knew there'd be no treasure here but water. But I used that knowledge in an attempt to gain a respite,

hoping for some break that would enable us to escape Sweigert and the Jovian.

"They didn't dream, of course, that what they were coming here for was merely water. Sweigert, without knowing it, drowned in the very treasure he was seeking."

"Oh," said Jean. And that was all she could say.

But not Crane. "There's another treasure, however, that I found—" he began.

"*What?*" Jean's eyes snapped. "Not been holding out on me, have you?"

Crane took her in his arms. "Not any longer, you little goof. Not any longer!"

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including many respected names in sf.)

It gave us a sense of community. We sheltered together for sustenance. We needed it. Here we were, believers in space travel when space travel was arrant nonsense, warners of atomic doom when the atomic bomb was something we were holding over the heads of those Godless commies—"What? You read that crazy Buck Rogers stuff?" was the usual reaction we met when we confessed the truth.

So we told ourselves that we were the Prophets of Tomorrow. That we knew better. That our innings would come, some day. We repeated, *ad nauseum*, the story of how the FBI visited Cleve Cartmill after a too-convincing story was published describing an atom bomb, in the early forties. And when Sputnik I went up, we cheered. Total vindication!

—Maybe.

A lot of sf magazines died in the late fifties. A lot more had died in the early and middle fifties. What went wrong?

The pulp magazines died in 1955. The handwriting had been on the wall for six years. Street & Smith, the oldest publisher of pulp magazines (they'd started with "dime novels"), killed its remaining line of pulps in 1949. And that was the second year of widespread, network television.

The other publishers held on, even while covertly establishing other, more viable, enterprises, like lines of paperback books. A few began trimming the edges on their pulps. But I can recall a local drugstore in the town where I grew up condensed its display shelf of pulps from five feet displayed with only the spines showing, to less than a foot, the cover of the topmost showing, in less than a year. The demise of the pulp was that fast.

The man who moved his lips while he read was now watching television, his feet propped up on another chair and a cold beer near his hand. And his lips weren't moving any more.

We survived that. We survived the collapse of an entire industry. Less than a handful of mystery pulps and one—yes, *one!*—western magazine made it with us, through the transition into the present "digest-size" (named after READER'S DIGEST, the first to popularize that size) format. There was an abortive attempt to carry the revolution one step further and into the "vest-pocket" format of QUICK and its host of imitators, but that fad died quickly.

But then, the sf magazine had never *really* been a pulp. We had always been a field apart, a fish out of water. Even when our magazines were printed on pulp presses along with thirty other titles, edited by the same man who edited all those other pulps, illustrated by the same men, and even written by many of the same writers, we were unique. We were not pulp.

Maybe we should have been. The best in pulp writing never intruded far into our field. Men like John D. MacDonald looked us over, wrote for us when it was worth while, and moved on. That's a shame, because as MacDonald's *The Girl, The Gold Watch and Everything* proves, his is a talent we could all profit from. And many others, like William Campbell Gault, Lester Dent, and Louis L'Amour, proved pulp writing was not, *per se*, bad writing. So many science fiction writers have been amateur writers, in both the best and worst senses of that word. Never forced to live solely by their writing skills as were pulp writers (many sf writers are strictly part-time, spare-time writers), the amateurs who

dominate our field have often neglected their skills as writers. (Many, it shames me to say, have not even learned the rudiments of writing.) Yet, the sf writer has a love for his field and a dedication to it which is all but unique. (It will come as a shock to some sf fans and readers, but there *are* western and mystery writers who feel this same affection for their chosen fields.)

This love of the field has been another outgrowth of our small-community feeling towards sf. Many present-day sf writers and editors are former fans. Even those who were never a part of active sf fandom have a long history of special fondness for sf. We know each other. Literally. Each convention brings together many familiar faces, renews many friendships, and sometimes reunites two old friends who've not seen each other for one or two decades.

Add it all up: The special ghetto within the pulp ghetto, the sense of futur-mindedness, the amateur dedication of both fans and professionals, the paranoia and the honest sense of special pride . . . These things, and more, are what the Old Wave of sf represents. These are intangibles which have little to do with the actual nature of a story, but which are summoned up in unconscious support of a Tradition.

And now the community, that little, close-knit ethnic community, is being exploded by sudden population-growth, by apparent block-busting tactics—and a sense of Tradition is suddenly transmuted into a wave of Reactionaryism.

Just what is happening?

For years some of our best people have cried out for release from the specific confines of the ghetto. It wasn't that they necessarily wanted to go elsewhere, but that the didn't want to feel *penned*

up in here. Some of them were crying out for Critical Acceptance, when in actuality they wanted Higher Pay Rates. Some lusted after mundane Status—they were tired of being patronized by the Establishment critics. Others simply wanted to see their work judged as *writing*, and wanted neither the special pleading of some sf-oriented reviewers nor the cold shoulder of outside critics and readers.

It is very understandable. I recall the day I called upon an editor at one New York publishing house. No enemy of sf, he had been responsible for a considerable sf program by his publisher, and he had been quite willing to see me even though I was not at that time at all well known as a writer.

His secretary showed me into his office and he looked up and waved me to a seat, cupping the phone in his hand and explaining that he'd be with me in a minute. It was a small office. It was impossible for me not to hear his end of the conversation. He was talking with his boss, and they were discussing a book he wanted to buy. As became quickly apparent, it was not a work of science fiction. "I think we should bid up to sixty thousand," he said. "We *need* that book. I'd put up ten thousand out of my pocket for that book." I imagine his offer was hyperbole, but I was impressed by the sums named.

The conversation over, he cradled the phone and turned to me. We chatted a bit, and then the subject of the book I had submitted to him came up. "I like it," he said, "and I want to buy it." Then he explained that inasmuch as I was a relative unknown and the book was my first for his company, he could offer only \$1250.00 for it. I had expected \$1500.00, but I swallowed my pride and accepted his offer. I'd written

books for less.

As I left that office, my pleasure in selling my book was strangely tempered by the knowledge that the going market-price, then, for a science fiction novel, was about \$1500.00 (an advance against royalties, to be sure, but royalties were unlikely to exceed that sum for years after the book went on sale)—while a “mainstream” work might fetch a bid of \$60,000.00! And that was not an unreasonably high bid for the period (the book in question was the memoirs of a doctor; it never hit the bestseller lists).

I don't imagine my experience has been unique. At that moment I felt very sharply the boundaries of my ghetto.

The Movement started in England. English sf has never been as closely tied to the pulps as has been American sf—England still remembers Wells. But I find it curious that while British writers such as John Christopher managed to crack the ghetto (with serial sales to *THE SATURDAY EVENING POST* and the like) years ago, the primary energizer has been a young man who found his start working for a succession of sleazy publishers doing such things as writing new blurbs and dialogue for reprinted comic strips, and writing enormous volumes of what would once have constituted pulp fiction over here. Perhaps Michael Moorcock felt the bonds of his ghetto more sharply than anyone else. Perhaps, having worked in a literary cellar for so long he was more eager than most for the sight of daylight. Certainly the guru of the British New Wave, J.G. Ballard, has never done less than His Own Thing—even in the late fifties, for the old-guard *NEW WORLDS* magazine, before there was any New Wave to speak of.

I have very little sympathy for most

of what passes for the New Wave fiction currently being published in Britain, but considerable sympathy for the motives which seem to produce it.

At the Lunacon just over (perhaps you wondered what the connection was, after all this time?), two program items were *Impolite Interviews* of Tom Disch and Norman Spinrad, conducted by Terry Carr, who quoted them their bad reviews and then allowed them to defend themselves.

I was far more impressed by their statements of aims and purposes than I have been by anything I have read by either of them. And each, I think, was speaking for the New Wave in much of what he said.

I don't have a transcript handy, but the gist of their remarks, each given separately, was that each wanted to write stories which were free to conform to or to violate the conventional boundaries of science fiction, depending solely upon the specific direction of the story.

Both men have good classical educations in literature, and neither seems to feel any particular desire to isolate himself from the entire broad spectrum of literature in favor of a special set of “sf” conventions. When influences were named, sf writers were conspicuously unmentioned. Each remains attracted to sf for the freedom it offers to speculate about things and situations and people which are not of the here and now—but each insists upon his right to write a story which follows its own dictates, even if it departs from our own boundaries.

I fully sympathize. These men are approaching their writing as a serious artistic expression. They don't want meaningless rockets or rayguns thrust willynilly into their stories.

I think the implications of this attitude

towards writing sf are scaring a lot of those of us who still live on the old block, in the old tight-little-community. *These crazy kids don't know their place! I dunno about art, but I know what I like, and I like what I know!* Etc.

The result has been the recent publication of a series of tracts against the New Wave—one author of which has a similar sort of tract in our letter section this issue—and the Chosing of Sides between Old Wavers and New which distresses me, particularly since I have friends on both sides.

I have myself taken stands in the past against much which I do not like in the so-called New Wave—mostly in articles for fan publications. For the record: A great deal of the “experimental” work published (particularly in Britain) strikes me as unsuccessful and abortive. I think that some New Wave authors are inept as writers—rather like “action painters” who cannot draw representationally and never bothered to learn—and that many are poor craftsmen whose contempt for old standards masks an inability to master the old skills. A number of writers championed by the New Wave strike me as reptilian in both their stories and their actual in-person personalities. And I once remarked that I had no use for those stories written by writers who themselves hold humanity in contempt and loathing. Finally, I regard much of the noise currently being made about the New Wave as a packaging phenomenon—a way of calling attention to and promoting specific authors, books, or products. In this respect, it is the work of editors and critics much more than of the authors themselves, most of whom have little in common and reject the New Wave label.

However, this also must be said:

Most of the Old Wave is ill-written

garbage. We remember fondly the stories we read in our first year or two of exposure to science fiction because it was a time when we had few critical standards, all the ideas (no matter how old) seemed new and fresh, and our Sense of Wonder was in full bloom. This is in a sense an imprinting process and it often blinds us to the faults that lie in those stories we still recall with nostalgia. The bulk of the writing in science fiction is sub-par. It compares poorly even with the bulk of the writing in those other literary ghettos—like mysteries and westerns. The best writers we can boast as products of our field do not compare well as *writers* with the best the other genres have produced—we have never had a Hammett or a Chandler, nor even a Ross Santee—and none of our writers can stand comparison with the true giants of literature. I am continually distressed when as an editor I am shown the works of major names in our field, writers who are published regularly in the best magazines of our field—and I find their stories full of elementary errors of spelling and grammar and often in violation of the most Old Wavish rules of story construction. Put plainly, many of the Old Masters in our field are frauds. They have gotten by on nostalgia, on the substitution of Grandiose Ideas for such elementals as Plot and Characterization, and they have become Old Masters less by talent and skill than by longevity, continued exposure, and the fact that in our small pond, a frog needn't be too big to stand out. Too many of our Dedicated Amateurs are “amateur” in the wrong sense of the word. And one wonders if their fear of the New Wave and of the opening up of their community isn't really just a fear that now they will have to stand before the world naked, deprived of their special pleadings and special criteria, judged as writers among

other writers and nothing more. How many know they are essentially failures, but offer the excuse that "an inside crowd" is "hogging the awards," the attention, the kudos, etc. to excuse themselves?

No, what this field needs, either to continue as a field or to be absorbed into the mainstream, is more honest writers willing to stand on their own two feet and be judged as writers and nothing more. The Wave of the banner under which they stand is not important. The critical salvos fired over their heads by opposing camps are not important. What is important is that these writers write and come forth to present their wares.

We will be the judge. You and me. The readers and the editors, but ultimately you, the readers. When a man writes a story we like, I will buy it, and you will buy it from me. When a man tells an honest story and tells it well, we'll know him for what he is. And when another man shucks us, slips over a shoddy piece of goods on us, we'll discover that too. He may be twenty years old or sixty years old, and he may consider himself Old Hat or New Wave, but that won't be a consideration. We'll judge the story.

I'd like to close right there, on that resounding declaration, but I must deflate my own sails a bit. The stories you

find here in AMAZING must of necessity reflect my taste as an editor, and the tastes I believe you, as readers, to possess. This is a matter of grim economic necessity—we have no Arts Council grants here. Moreover, these stories must represent the stories submitted to me, and, to an extent, those passed on to me by earlier editors. Each step of the way, you see, imposes an additional limitation. We publish the best we can get, but that is not always the Very Best. I will not apologize for any specific story in this magazine. If I didn't think it warranted publication, it wouldn't be here. But obviously I will like some better than others. And you may like those others better.

I want to hear from you. I want to know how the magazine strikes you. I'd like your reaction to everything in it—from the editorials and reviews to the stories and the letters. I've been rather boldly experimenting in these last two issues, and I shall continue, but I need the feedback of your honest response. This is not a magazine edited to suit my private whims—it is a commercial product offered in the public marketplace. We want to make it the best magazine we can—within our necessary limitations—so that it best satisfies you. We obviously can't satisfy everyone, but we hope to satisfy more of you each issue.

So there it is: tell me what you think.

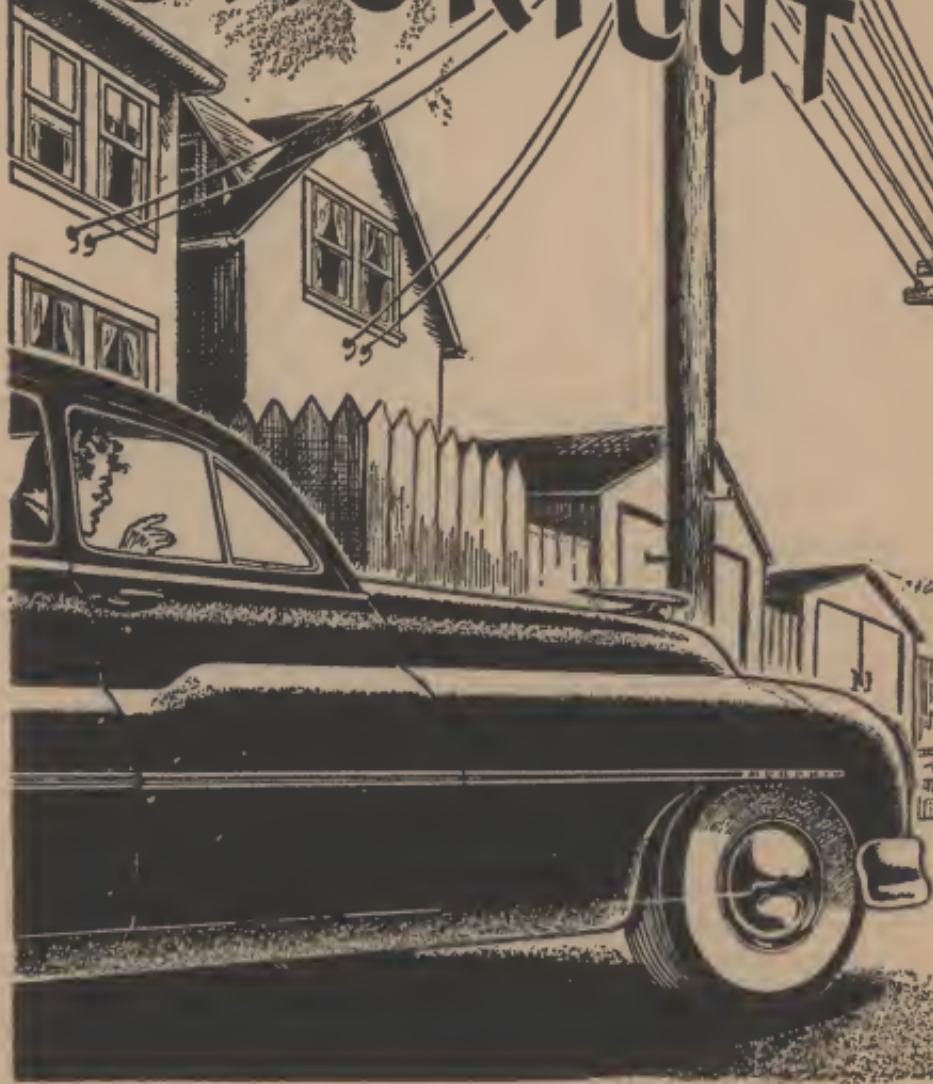
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THE SHORTCUT



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By ROG PHILLIPS

When you have to get somewhere in a hurry, the thing to do is to take a shortcut. Arthur took one—but went through more than space!

LOOK OUT for that safety island, Arthus. Careful. I think that car isn't going to stop for the stop sign. Watch out! Don't jerk your brakes hard, Arthur. Don't pass that car. There's a streetcar coming behind."

"Yes, dear" Arthur sighed quietly to himself so his wife wouldn't notice it and take it as a sign of revolt.

"Watch out for that dog, Arthur. Arthur! You fool! You almost hit

that dog! Why can't you learn to drive? Pass that car—no. No! wait a minute, there's that streetcar behind us again. Now pass! No! All right. Now pass. Why didn't you pass? We might not get another chance for blocks."

"Sorry, May," Arthur muttered. His spiritless eyes came to rest on a tall, fairly well dressed man standing out from the curb a half block ahead, his thumb elevated in the universal



signal for a ride.

A dim spark crept into Arthur's eyes. The hitch hiker was only twenty feet away now. He pressed his foot firmly on the brakes. The car came to a quick stop. The hitch hiker needed no more invitation. The door opened and he slipped into the front seat beside Arthur while May gasped her indignation wordlessly from the back seat. The car was in motion again instantly.

"Thanks," the stranger said.

Arthur nodded. His eyes studiously avoided the rear view mirror and its reflection of his wife's outraged glare. His fingers twirled the steering wheel, turning the car into Harlem Avenue headed south.

He had picked up the stranger for the very simple reason that he knew his wife would shut up while someone else was in the car. He had to make it to the airport in half an hour if May was to catch her plane. Her back seat driving distracted him.

It wasn't only her back seat driving. She was that way in everything. Even when he washed the dishes after supper she hovered at his back warning him to be careful, inspecting each dish to see that it was clean, and keeping up a running line of chatter that had the effect of freezing his own powers of judgment.

The hitch hiker was silent for several minutes, his calm blue eyes studying Arthur and May. He noticed the lines of frustration on Arthur's face, the domineering set to May's face.

"How far you going?" he finally asked.

"To the airport," Arthur said. "Have to make it in less than half an hour. The way traffic is, I doubt if I can do it."

"I doubt if you can," the stranger said thoughtfully. He was silent, apparently considering something.

When he spoke again it was a continuation of his former words. "The regular way."

"What do you mean, the regular way?" Arthur asked.

"I mean, down Harlem Avenue," the stranger replied. "There's a shortcut you could take."

"Shortcut?" Arthur echoed. "Harlem Avenue is straight and goes right to the airport. What can be shorter than that?"

"This shortcut is," the stranger persisted. "From here, you can make it to the airport in about five minutes on the shortcut."

NONSENSE," Arthur was skeptical. "It's nearly fifteen miles from here in a straight line!"

"Wanta bet?" the stranger asked, a gleam of amusement in his eyes.

"If we can get there in five minutes, I'll take you wherever you want to go—after my wife catches her plane."

"It's a deal," the stranger agreed. "If I can't get you there in less than five minutes, I'll pay your wife's plane fare."

"O.K. Now, where's this shortcut?"

"Just do as I tell you," the stranger said. "Turn right at the next corner."

Arthur did as he was told, turning right and driving for three or four blocks before the stranger gave other directions. Those directions involved two U turns—or was it more than two? In the end, Arthur was directed to turn his car down a deserted alley. As he came out at the other end of that alley, he found himself on Harlem Avenue, just a block from the drive-in to the airport.

He looked at his watch. The total time had been just a little over four minutes. There was a dazed look on his face as he slid the car into an empty parking spot, climbed out hastily and loaded himself down with May's

luggage.

"Now, you be sure and be here for me next Wednesday at three o'clock promptly," May began as they walked toward the air terminal alone, the stranger still sitting in the front seat of the car. "And don't you spend any money while I'm gone. There's plenty to eat at home if you aren't too lazy to fix it. I want every cent of your pay check accounted for when I get back. Be careful when you wash the dishes. Don't break any..."

The stranger was still sitting in the car when Arthur returned. Arthur looked at him sharply. His eyes returned the stare with a light of silent laughter in them.

"Now, then," Arthur said as he backed the car out into the driving lane, "I want you to explain how it's possible to go fifteen miles in four minutes at a speed of about twenty miles an hour by a lot of hokus pokus U turns and confusing directions."

"But they weren't confusing," the stranger objected. "It really was the shortest way to the airport, only no one seems to have figured it out except me."

“YOU SEE,” the stranger expanded. “Distances and directions are just the ones your ancestors got by wandering here and there and forming paths. The first man followed a certain path, and everyone after him went the same way he did. Nobody ever tried to find a shorter way. Roads were built where paths had been. Even airplanes follow the old paths instead of taking the shortest route to where they want to go.”

“I see,” Arthur said dryly, feeling that the stranger was mocking him in some way. “Well, I promised I would take you wherever you wanted to go, and I will. Where do you want to go?”

“Oh, there's no hurry about my getting there,” the stranger said evasively. “I'd like to have a bite to eat first, anyway. Would you like to join me? On me, of course.”

“Why, yes,” Arthur was somewhat flattered at his invitation, but without knowing why he felt so.

“Good.” The stranger's eyes speculated a moment. “If you'd let me get behind the wheel,” he suggested.

“I'm perfectly capable of following your directions,” Arthur said somewhat testily.

“You're quite right,” the stranger placated him. “And now that I come to think of it, the only way you'll learn any of the shortcuts, is to drive yourself.”

Arthur tried his best to remember the directions he was following. His eyes also picked out and memorized landmarks to assist him later when he would try it alone.

Again, the devious path ended with turning into a deserted alley. And again, when Arthur drove the car out the other end of the alley, they had arrived.

They were now in a busy street. Automobiles whizzed by rapidly, seeming intent on keeping Arthur's car from ever getting out into the street.

And all the cars had California license plates!

Across the street was a ten thousand dollar building with a fifty thousand dollar neon sign in front of it. There were long parallel glass tubes with notes dotted here and there. The notes seemed to be like those one sees on a piece of sheet music, but they spelled out the words, “Melody Lane.”

Arthur managed to steal into the curb lane of traffic and park the car. The stranger climbed out. Arthur followed him meekly. At the corner,

they crossed in the pedestrian lane. The street sign said Cahuenga Blvd.!

The giant clock in the face of a marble front building said ten after one. Arthur looked at his watch. His watch said ten after three! Ten minutes ago he had been at the airport in Chicago. Now—now they were in Hollywood!

"What a shortcut!" Arthur murmured.

"What did you say?"

"Nothing," Arthur grunted, dodging a car that went through against the lights. He was engaging in a little mental arithmetic.

FROM CHICAGO to Hollywood was somewhere around three thousand miles. Maybe not that much, but certainly over two thousand! It had only taken eight or nine minutes to go that distance, and the car hadn't gone over forty miles an hour!

Not only that, they'd gone the whole distance without leaving city streets and alleys! What about all the farms and mountains in between?

He dodged another car and jumped to the curb just behind the stranger. They started along the sidewalk toward Melody Lane.

"Say!" Arthur asked firmly. "How could we come all the way from Chicago to Hollywood without leaving city streets?"

"That's simple," the stranger said, not pausing in his stride. "You see, that's another one of those things that people have got all wrong. They think Chicago and Los Angeles are two different cities. They get in their cars and drive and drive for days at a time—and come right back where they started, into the city. It looks different, they traveled over two thousand miles, there's a lot of new faces in the Chamber of Commerce,

so they take it for granted it's a different city."

"Nuts," Arthur said bravely. With May not around, he was beginning to be himself. "I think you just brought me here to show off. There's lots of good places to eat in Chicago."

"Oh, no," the stranger said innocently. "I eat here quite often. Sometimes I walk here; but then, from the loop in Chicago to here, it's a little closer than it is from the airport."

"Oh," Arthur said, feeling frustrated.

They sat down at a table near some indoor palm trees, symbols of the waiters' guild in Hollywood. A beautiful young thing in a petite red uniform came over, decided Arthur must be a director or someone else too high up to have to dress the part, and flashed him her screen-test smile.

Training made him drop his eyes instantly to the table cloth. Then he remembered May wasn't along and lifted them, smiling timidly.

The stranger seemed to know what he wanted and what Arthur wanted, too. "I'll order," he said. "I know what's good here."

WHEN THE waitress left, he pulled out a pack of cigarettes. He offered one to Arthur and lifted his eyebrows politely when Arthur declined. He lit one with an expensive lighter, and after taking a few deep puffs, placed it between his fingers to use as a baton to emphasize his remarks.

"You see," he began, "the whole American public is kept fooled by the higher-ups into thinking there are a lot of cities and towns, all filled with people. Actually, there's only one big city and one small town. And there aren't more than ten or twelve million people all told."

Arthur snorted.

"It's a fact," the stranger said mildly. "Try this sometime. Go to some small town and write your initials on the front of, say, a chain dress shop. Then hop in your car and drive to the next town as quick as you can. Go to the same dress shop in that town and look in the spot where you wrote your initials. They probably wouldn't have had time to erase them before you got there."

Arthur snorted again.

"How about the people?" he asked. "They won't be the same people."

"Oh, yes, they will," the stranger said quickly. "That's the key to the whole deception. You see, people are location conscious. Also, they are split personalities. One of your personalities believes it lives in Los Angeles. You yourself believe you live in Chicago. Actually, it's the same city and you and someone living in Los Angeles are the same man. That way, the census taker marks you down as two different people, when you're really only one."

"Very interesting," Arthur dared to sneer.

"I see you don't believe me," the stranger said with a tolerant chuckle. "But how do you explain our getting from the airport in Chicago to Hollywood in less than ten minutes?"

"How do you explain the people who drive west for several days to do the same thing?" Arthur countered.

"That's simple, as I told you," the stranger replied. "They really just drive in a big circle and wind up where they started, but they believe they are in a different city. It's the same way with airplanes. They follow the routes laid out on maps, and also the markers set out along the way."

"How about the surveyors that laid out the roads and markers?" Arthur asked disdainfully, yet uncomfortably conscious of the fact that he had

made it from Chicago to Hollywood along some "shortcut" in less than ten minutes.

"Oh, them!" the stranger shrugged, turning his attention to the delicious roast duck the waitress set before him.

Arthur watched him in exasperated silence as he started in on his own roast duck dinner. His mind revolved over the mad things that had been said, trying to find a logical explanation.

ONE THOUGHT rose above all others, terrible in its potentialities. He had promised the stranger he would take him wherever it was wanted to go and the stranger had wanted to have a bite to eat before they started. To get that bite to eat, they had "taken a shortcut," but they had gone somewhere around three thousand miles for it. And that meant—what?

The stranger was maybe crazy, but not crazy enough to want to go three thousand miles for something to eat before taking a short trip across the street! No indeed! Where he wanted to go was more likely twenty thousand miles.

That would be all right if he had a shortcut that would get them there in fifteen minutes. They would get there easy. But then the stranger would get out of the car and he would be alone.

How would he get back home? He knew he wouldn't be able to follow the directions. Why, right now, if the stranger walked away from him, he wouldn't be able to get back to Chicago in time to meet May at the airport on her return trip!

Three thousand miles he'd have to go without the shortcut. It was upsetting. He declined the dessert and spent the rest of the time chewing

at his lower lip worriedly.

The stranger, his face calm and relaxed, his eyes absently watching what went on around him, seemed almost to have forgotten Arthur.

Only when he had finished his second cup of coffee and his dish of ice cream, and was ready to depart, did he look at his companion.

"Shall we go?" he asked politely. To Arthur, it had the sound of ominousness. He regretted his rash promise to take the stranger where ever it was he wanted to go; but how was he to have known?

Back at the car, he climbed behind the wheel and waited while the stranger opened the door on the other side and settled himself comfortably, sighing with contentment.

"Well?" Arthur rattled. He cleared his throat and tried again. "Well?"

"Well what?" the stranger asked.

"Where do we go?" Arthur asked timidly.

"Oh," the stranger said, as if the thought of going somewhere had been farthest from his mind. "Let's see, now. I think we'd better go back where we were and start from there. That way it'll be simpler for you to find your way back home."

"I doubt it," Arthur groaned. "I couldn't even find my way back from here, and we just came here."

THE STRANGER gave him a shrewd glance. "I can see you're regretting your promise," he said. "Don't tell me that if we went back to the airport in Chicago now you'd reneg?"

"Of course not," Arthur said hastily. "But how was I to even dream your shortcuts went all over the country. While we're on the subject, just exactly where is this place you were going when I picked you up?"

"Oh," the stranger shrugged. "Just

a twenty minute drive from here—if we started from here."

"Twenty minutes," Arthur groaned. His adam's apple jumped spasmodically. "J-j-just what's the name of this place where you're...going?"

"It's in Chicago, not too far from where you first saw me," the stranger replied.

"Oh," Arthur said relieved.

"You see," the stranger went on, "I really went out of my way and wasted a lot of time to help you out."

"Let's go then," Arthur said with new spirit. "It'll be more than glad to take you anyplace—in Chicago."

"Just a minute," the stranger said. The shouts of a newshawk were coming from the sidewalk. The stranger stuck his head out the car window. "Over here!"

The headlines were in two inch red block letters. They said NORTH-EAST AIRLINES PLANE CRASHES. Arthur's eyes frantically skimmed the account. It had been the plane his wife was on, and one sentence stood out. All on board had been killed!

"My wife!" he choked. "My wife! That was her plane."

"Yes," the stranger said mildly. "I suppose she was killed." He watched the play of expression on Arthur's face. Hope, incredulous disbelief, and joy, mixed with self accusation and guilt for these spontaneous feelings, and an ineffectual attempt to look shocked and griefstricken. "Don't take it so hard," he added with a concealed smile.

"It's quite a shock to me," Arthur said.

"I suppose it is," the stranger agreed. "But I'm late now. Suppose we get going. You had accident insurance on her?"

Arthur nodded as he stepped on the starter and slipped the car in gear.

The stranger laid the paper on the seat between them and began giving Arthur directions for the shortcut back to Chicago.

Again, there were two U turns and several bewildering right and left turns, ending with turning into a deserted alley.

AGAIN, WHEN they emerged at the end, traffic was heavy. It took a couple of minutes for a break so that Arthur could get into the street. He turned to the right and drove in silence. The street marker at the next corner said that it was Harlem Avenue.

"You know," the hitch hiker broke the silence, "one thing I've found about life that carried me through everything."

"What's that?" Arthur asked absently.

"Fatalism," he said solemnly. "Things happen the way they do, no matter what. If a thing's going to happen it's going to, and there's no getting out of it. All we can do is recognize it and take advantage of it the best we can."

"I suppose that has something to do with shortcuts?" Arthur prompted.

"In a way," the stranger hesitated. "The shortcuts are always there if you know about them. If you don't, it's a human failing always to take the longest way around and think it's the shortest way. But there are shortcuts in time as well as space."

"In time?" Arthur echoed.

"Yes," he said. "People think it's twenty-four hours from now until this time tomorrow, so to them it is. But if they knew a shortcut, it might only be ten minutes."

He sat up and looked through the windshield.

"You can let me off at the next corner," he continued. "People think

the past is gone forever, too; but if they could find the shortcuts, they could even go back to yesterday. It's all a matter of knowing the shortcuts, both in time and in space. When you know them, you don't have to stay in the cow trails and paths worn in time and space by our unthinking ancestors, and followed by the vast herd because there doesn't seem to be any shorter path."

Arthur slowed to a stop at the curb.

"You can't change things, mind you," the stranger said as he opened the door. "If you went back to yesterday, for example, you'd be you, and do exactly the things you did then, within certain limits. You might not even know you had gone back, but just think the same thoughts you did then, and never suspect."

He climbed out and, keeping one hand on the door, looked in at Arthur with a humorous twinkle in his eye.

"Thanks for the lift," he said. "And remember, you can't change things, but you can take advantage of them when you know the shortcuts. The airport's just a few blocks ahead now."

CWELL!" The sound of May's voice from the back seat caused the hair on Arthur's scalp to crawl. He nearly ran into a safety island before he got a grip on himself. "Of all the dumb idiots. We're late to the airport and you have to stop and pick up a hitch hiker who talks a leg off of you. Watch out for that safety island, Arthur. I do believe you picked him up just to shut me up."

"Now, May," Arthur remonstrated, his thoughts in a whirl. "You know that isn't so."

"Look out for that car ahead," May screamed. "He isn't going to stop for the stop light."

The car in question stopped abruptly.

"He didn't look like he would," May relaxed. "Be careful. That woman crossing the street doesn't see you. Don't pull out! There's a streetcar behind you. Slow down!"

"Yes, dear," Arthur murmured. His thoughts were repeating things the stranger had said—or had he? "Shortcuts in time as well as space..." But of course it was all a day dream. If it had really happened, May would have already taken the plane and the plane would have crashed, killing her.

But she was here! She hadn't taken the plane yet! That meant that if she didn't, she wouldn't be killed. But of course it was only a day dream. Still...the stranger's voice came back, "And, remember, you can't change things, but you can take advantage of them..."

Take advantage of them. Like making May miss that plane that was going to crash and kill all on board. But if he caused her to miss it, she would be worse than ever to live with, impossible as that seemed. Worse than ever...

But it had all been just a day dream. A shortcut that would take you from the Chicago airport to Hollywood in ten minutes! Arthur chuckled mirthlessly.

His eyes glanced down at the seat beside him. There was a slightly rumpled newspaper laying there. His chuckle stopped short. Keeping one eye on the road, he reached down and straightened the paper out.

Those red headlines stared up at him. **NORTHEAST AIRLINES PLANE CRASHES!** It was a Los Angeles paper!

"Slow down, Arthur," May's voice came at him. "Here's where you turn in. Signal, Arthur! There's a car right behind you. Signal!"

"...take advantage of them..." the stranger's voice whispered. "You can even go back to yesterday..."

Arthur pulled the car into a parking space and shut off the motor.

"Hurry, Arthur," May said anxiously. "I'll miss my plane. Grab my bags. HURRY."

ARTHUR re-read the two inches of small type under the headline. All on board were killed, but it was too early to have the names of the passengers listed yet.

"Hurry!" May had turned around and was glaring at him.

He guiltily dragged her two travel bags out of the back and struggled along in her wake. There was a half scared look on his face, and a light of growing decision in his pale eyes.

"Yes, May," he said.

He followed her into the depot, across the waiting room to the check-in desk. May had elbowed ahead of the others and was demanding attention. He slid her bags under the counter onto the weighing-in platform.

The young lady in the uniform of the Northeast Airlines finished checking on May's ticket. Arthur cleared his throat guiltily.

"Be sure and get some insurance, May," he said timidly.

"Insurance across the waiting room at the desk to the right of the door," the young lady directed. "But hurry. The plane is almost ready to leave."

"Let's skip the insurance, Arthur," May objected. "I can't miss the plane."

"Nonsense!" Arthur said with a show of spirit. "Insurance is important."

Again, May's elbows gained them immediate service. While she was signing the blank, Arthur hastily read it.

"Only five thousand?" he objected. "Give us five of those. Twenty-five thousand is better protection."

"Sorry," the new young lady said mildly. "Five thousand is the limit."

"The limit?" Arthur echoed. "I'll call my insurance broker and get some more accident insurance."

"Later," May murmured tenderly, "I really do believe you love me."

She bent over and kissed him briefly, then turned to hasten through the door to the waiting plane.

"May!" Arthur's voice was filled with misery and hesitation.

"What is it, Arthur?" She paused.

"Nothing," he said. "Have a good trip."

He turned back to the young lady at the insurance desk. "Where did you say the phone booths were?" he asked.

FIFTeen minutes later, he backed his car out of the parking space, a satisfied expression on his face. He had been able to talk his insurance broker into a fifty thousand dollar accident insurance on May for twenty-four hours starting at once, with the ten dollar premium to be mailed in before the day was over. Fifty thousand dollars!

He had written out the check and mailed it right at the airport so as to be sure there would be no slipup.

He turned north on Harlem, humming to himself. Once he reached down and patted the Los Angeles paper affectionately. Ahead was the alley he had come out of on that first shortcut. He pursed his lips in amazement as he noticed that it was just half a block from the place the stranger had gotten out of the car the second time along.

Frowning in an effort to remember the details of the shortcut, he turned into the alley. He had entered the

alley at the other end from the left. He was sure of that. He would go slow and try to remember landmarks. If he could only do it he would be in North Chicago in a few minutes.

Several blocks and as many turns later, the houses began to look different in some way. He couldn't remember any of them. He made a U turn and tried to retrace his path to a point where it was familiar again.

The surroundings grew stranger than ever. Arthur no longer cared about getting to North Chicago by a shortcut. All he wanted to do was get back onto Harlem Avenue. But where was it?

He stopped to read a street sign in quaint, old English letters. As nearly as he could make it out, it said Higsby Avenue and—and HARLEM! But the Harlem here was a narrow, cobblestone lane!

Arthur had been the whole length of Harlem. He was positive that it didn't look like this anyplace. It was deserted, too. Not a car in sight and not even one person.

"There must a Harlem Place," he thought. "And this is it." The thought relieved him. He made another U turn, backing twice to make it in the narrow intersection.

He headed back along Higsby, deciding to keep going until he saw something familiar.

After several blocks, he saw something that seemed familiar ahead of him. He speeded up. As he drew nearer, he recognized it as the buildings of an airport.

BUT WHAT an airport! The terminal building was several times larger than that at the Chicago airport. A plane was coming in for a landing as he parked his car. It, at least, looked familiar. In large red script, the name NORTHEAST AIR-

LINES was blazoned on it.

Arthur climbed out and went to the doors entering the waiting room. He had decided to keep his mouth shut and buy a paper and find out where this place was.

He pushed through the doors into a vast waiting room. It was too deserted for a busy air terminal. The only human being in the place was a man in a bright red uniform, sitting behind a long counter. Above the counter in large letters was a sign saying, "Check in here before leaving the airport."

At the far end of the waiting room was a similar sign which said, "Immigrant Station buses through these doors."

His eyes turned back to the man behind the counter. He seemed asleep.

At the far end of the counter were several doors. One of these now opened. A man in ordinary civilian clothes came through. His expression was dazed.

The uniformed man behind the counter came to life and stood up. Arthur approached slowly so as to be

able to see what went on better. Other people were now coming through the doors. They were evidently the passengers from the plane that had been about to land when he came in. There were men and women.

Arthur was quite close to the counter now. There was something strange about the man behind it. He couldn't quite make out what it was, but there was something strange about him.

Arthur approached the counter until he was only a few feet from the now busy official. Suddenly he knew what was so strange about that man.

"Arthur!"

Arthur jerked around to the direction of the voice that had called his name. May was descending on him with outstretched arms, a glad look on her face. He watched her with wide eyes, his face pale.

He jerked his eyes loose and turned them back to the official behind the counter, comprehension and horror dawning on his face. The official had horns. Short ones—but horns.

THE END

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SCIENCE OF MAN
by LEON E. STOVER

WANTED—A NEW MYTH FOR TECHNOLOGY

Note: This is a talk I gave in a symposium at Illinois Institute of Technology, where I am Chairman of a science-fictionish Committee for Metatechnology. Indeed, among our other panelists I included Harry Harrison, a former editor of this magazine, if you will remember. And what is Metatechnology? You might say it is the science of looking at the non-technical dimensions of technology. We are going to need that new science, I think. And that is why I organized a Symposium on Metatechnology where I work. I want to change my employer's outlook. Anybody want to sign up to be a metatechnician?

In "The Lord of the Dynamos" H. G. Wells tells the story of Azumi-zi, an engineer's assistant come from India to help the chief attendant of three dynamos at Camberwell which supplied energy for an electric railway.

There were three dynamos with their engines at Camberwell. The two that

have been there since the beginning are small machines; the larger one was new. The smaller machines made a reasonable noise; their straps hummed over the drums, every now and then the brushes buzzed and fizzled, and the air churned steadily, whoo! whoo! between their poles. One was loose in its foundations and kept the shed vibrating. But the big dynamo drowned these little noises altogether with the sustained drone of its iron core, which somehow set part of the ironwork humming. The place made the visitor's head reel with the throb, throb, throb of the engines, the rotation of the big wheels, the spinning ball-valves, the occasional spittings of the steam, and over all the deep, unceasing, surging note of the big dynamo. This last noise was from an engineering point of view a defect, but Azumi-zi accounted it unto the monster for mightiness and pride.

Azumi-zi's awe of the biggest dynamo

—the lord of the three dyanmos—is a caricature of Victorian respect for iron work and machines. The noise from the dynamo was an engineering defect, perhaps, but it radiated the spirit of machinery. Respect must attach to something receivable by the human senses, in this case a certain orchestration of sights, sounds and vibrations. The scene that Wells describes is in keeping with that romance of mechanistic materialism that he is attacking in his story.

If it were possible we would have the noises of that shed always about the reader as he reads, we would tell our story to such an accompaniment. It was a steady stream of din, from which the ear picked out first one thread and then another; there was the intermittent snorting, panting and seething of the steam-engines, the suck and thud of their pistons, the dull beat on the air as the spokes of the great driving wheels came round, a note the leather straps made as they ran tighter or looser, and a fretful tumult from the dynamos; and, over all, sometimes inaudible, as the ear tired of it, and then creeping back upon the senses again, was this trombone note of the big machine. The floor never felt steady and quiet beneath one's feet, but quivered and jarred.

The chief attendant, Holroyd, was fond of kicking his helper, a preindustrial man who "did not pry into the machinery and try to learn the ways of it." But ignorance is no barrier to the worship of machinery, which Azumi-zi did, quite literally—one step better than Holroyd himself.

Azumi-zi polished and cleaned the metal parts of the great dynamo with a mysterious sense of service.

At last his dim feelings grew more distinct and took shape in thoughts, and at last in acts. When he came into the roaring shed one morning he salamed to the Lord of Dynamos, and then, when Holroyd was away, he went and whispered to the thundering machine that he was its servant, and prayed to have pity on him and save him from Holroyd. . . .

The next time Holroyd maltreated him, Azumi-zi went presently to the Lord of Dynamos and whispered, "Thou seest, O my Lord!" and the angry whirr of the machinery seemed to answer him.

Holroyd sensed that Azumi-zi liked being near the big machine, and, for that, tried to keep him away from it. One day Holroyd caught Azumi-zi bowing before the machine. When kicked, Azumi-zi conceived the idea of making Holroyd a sacrifice to the Dynamo. Presently, Azumi-zi tripped Holroyd into the machine where he died a horrible death. The Dynamo didn't miss a beat—a powerful god, indeed. Was the Lord Dynamo still hungry? Azumi-zi tried to feed it the scientific manager who had come to check the accident involving Holroyd. But Azumi-zi was surprised in the act whereupon he dashed toward the dynamo and grabbed the naked terminals with both hands amid a loud sputter and roar of convulsed flesh. The last lines of the story are:

So ended prematurely the worship of the Dynamo Deity, perhaps the most short-lived of all religions. Yet withal it could at least boast a Martyrdom and a Human Sacrifice.

Yes, indeed, it *has* been a short-lived religion—this devotion to iron construction and power machinery brought on by

the industrial revolution. H. G. Wells saw the end coming, in his prophetic story, as early as 1894. We've paid the sacrifice to Progress. Can we avert the Martyrdom?

Somehow, we've lost our affection for technology. Engineering enrollment is falling; student protests are rising. Who will make the machines and structures of tomorrow? For it is certain that if we are to continue as a nation tomorrow must contain more technology, more organization made possible by technology, and more education for technology. Few will be motivated to learn about building this tomorrow unless the myth of yesterday's technology is updated for the proper interpretation of today's technology.

And out-of-date myth spells trouble. It indicates a change in technology that has not yet been perceived in time for reinterpretation against a new reality.

Take the history of the assembly line, a complex piece of technology now undergoing profound change. But first note, however, that technology is not unique to our "technological civilization." In popular usage, technology designates power-driven machinery, the belching smokestacks of heavy industry, and mass-produced goods. Anthropologists use the word more broadly to cover any tools, not just machinery and industrialization, and the way they are made and used. Technology, in this usage, is nothing new. It is as old as man. Man from the beginning of his human career fabricated tools, from the first stone butchering tools and hunting weapons, through the hoe, adze and ax of early agriculture, to the wheels and writing implements of Bronze Age civilization, the iron swords of the first conquest empires, and the steel-making of factory industrialism.

Tools have always provided an extension of man—extending his reach and muscle power. The novelty introduced by the industrial revolution was to make man an extension of his tools—attending spindles in a textile mill or tightening bolts on an assembly line. Preindustrial production depended on skilled artisans, craftsmen and mechanics. Textile mills and assembly lines sacrificed human skills to powered machinery, reducing the human element to a mere reflex performance of rote motions. Charles Chaplin dramatized this numbing human extension of machines in his classic film, *MODERN TIMES*, in which he plays the part of an assembly line worker who keeps at his tightening motions by habit even when off work. The message of the film is, to paraphrase Hamlet, "How like a cog is man."

All this has been changed lately by the automated machinery of cybernetic production. The unskilled actions of Chaplin's bolt tightener have been programmed into the memory banks of computers, which guide machinery in speeded-up mass production. Human skills transferred to machines have been transferred back to humans again. The skills in this case are not mechanical skills but knowledge skills. The knowledge skills related to cybernetic production, however, are restricted to those educated in them. Thus the crisis of abundance. People not educated in the new knowledge skills lack the earning power to buy their way into the material benefits these skills produce.

The sacrifice to technology made by these too uneducated to contribute to it and too unemployed to gain access to its benefits, cannot be redeemed by more of the same technology. Public issues raised by technology must be addressed by technology.

But no supporting mythology has yet been raised up for this task, except by artists, who as usual look forward to interpret realities that the rest of us belatedly come to justify. The recent movie, *2001: A SPACE ODYSSY*, hints at the new mythology we want. A spaceship, headed for Jupiter, encounters the domain of superbeings, and the hero is translated into an incorporeal entity of disembodied intellect. The same fate awaits the rest of mankind. This means the end of technological extensions of man's body because the body no longer exists to be extended by tools. Here is a metaphor of today's changing technology that wants interpretation in the education of engineers, designers and architects.

Technical education must prepare for the application of much wider knowledge than that of the physical sciences. It must apply knowledge of the social sciences if technology is to solve problems created by a technology applied out of a narrower spectrum of knowledge. The fact is that it is a technology informed by a broad band of knowledge, from politics, economics and sociology in addition to physics that must build tomorrow. Knowledge of such a range, melding the physical with the social sciences, is what will drive the technology of tomorrow, not mere electric dynamos. Knowledge, not human labor, not machines, not even computers, is coming to be the prime source of energy in gilding human society. Hence the mythic importance of *2001*, which dramatizes a transition from the material to the intellectual, and which thus recognizes the growing importance of knowledge as the prime economic resource.

Unless the social problems created by technology of the past are solved, we shall not be able to enjoy the fruits of

material progress. To this end, a new range of scientific knowledge must be applied. This is not the first time the question of application has arisen in science. The question was answered before, and it will be answered again.

It was not until the industrial revolution got rolling on its own that scientific knowledge was brought to bear on it. Until that time, the revolution was carried out by skilled craftsmen and mechanics. The vanguard of the revolution in America was situated with textile mills in New England owned by wealthy merchant families. The bright young men of these families often went abroad for their education, in France or Germany, where they may have studied abstract or pure science but never applied engineering. Engineering was for the less educated and less prominent families of self-taught production superintendents, who learned their engineering from work on the mechanical defects of textile machinery. The practical application of scientific discoveries to these problems was not thought fitting by educated men.

But in time a science based technology came about because men of wealth and power appreciated the benefits that would follow from such a combination. Industrial research came to the United States in 1902 with the research laboratories of the DuPont company. This was followed by General Electric which organized a scientific laboratory in 1904. American Telephone and Telegraph started one in 1907. World War I forced American industry as a whole to go into large scale research, building extensive labs and training large numbers of scientific personnel. World War II, and post-war government funds, made scientific research a big business devoted to invention, innovation, technical improvements, quality control and cost cutting

Today, our technical schools are in the same position as those snobbish New England mercantile families who despised the application of the physical sciences to the operation of their textile mills. The need for the application of the social sciences to technology is apparent. But no myth has been written with the power to persuade technical schools to make this new dimension of practicality glamorous enough for application. The myth that pure science, unsullied by the "dirty" politics of public issues, is still in charge, even though college freshmen—the paying customers—no longer find that myth glamorous enough to draw them into engineering.

A myth is not a derogatory word in the vocabulary of anthropology. Man does not live by reality alone. He requires a pleasing interpretation of things. Mythology is the word anthropologists use to designate that non-material part of culture that identifies, explains and justifies the social and material aspects of culture. Myth making is not a matter of truth or falsity, rationality or emotionality—although there is a measure of all of these in it—but rather a matter of acceptability: what is the best way to validate things, given the available sources of knowledge and information? Myth making is associated in the popular mind with the folk-lore of preliterate savages and is compared invidiously with our stock of scientific knowledge. But primitive peoples lack the accessibility to as much information as we have. We make the same use of the knowledge we have available to us, and that is to make a satisfying mythic statement about the origin of things, their justification, and a plea for their continued existence. Take the introductory words from our IIT BULLETIN.

The very first words explain the *orientation* of IIT:

SCIENCE OF MAN

Illinois Institute of Technology was organized in 1940 through the merger of two pioneer Chicago Institutions of higher learning, Armour Institute of Technology (founded in 1892) and Lewis Institute (founded in 1896).

Next we read of *justification*:

With the merger of the two institutions in 1940, IIT came into being with an already established tradition of service to urban civilization.

Finally, a *plea for continued existence* of the institution:

This modern plant constitutes a visible symbol of the forward view to which the institution is dedicated.

These words are mythic. They appeal to a sense of security lodged in the ongoing tradition of the university. The university could not exist without its myth. All human societies, and their component social systems, require a mythic dimension. It is a part of human existence everywhere. And as society changes, myths must change.

A new myth is wanted for our technology because our technology has changed. And technology has changed because the idea of science has changed.

Ever since the nationalization of Research & Development in the 1940s, science lost its last claim on the inner development of knowledge for its own sake. From then on, political decisions, not a sense of private curiosity, has decided what research the scientist should work on. Technology, as an application of knowledge, can no longer stand under the umbrella of pure science, undirtied by concerns of public policy. Technology must revise its mythology to bring it in line with the new myth-making about science as a responsible member of the community. Now that technology has

received its impulse in the early 20th century from the physical sciences, it is now the ideological dependent of science. If the idea of science has changed, technology must follow suit.

The fact is that uncritical affection for technology, when it was guided only by the physical sciences, allowed technology to create what it would, without any schedule of priorities nor with any assessment of results. The accumulative effects are most conspicuous in the educational crisis, the ethnic crisis, and the urban crisis, which altogether make for the number one crisis of governmental authority in this country.

Agriculture has been industrialized to such an extent that it requires only one million commercial farmers to feed the nation and provide for its exports. The squeeze on the pre-industrial Negro in the rural South has driven him into Northern cities where the rural-urban migration in general has pushed city populations beyond their optimum density. Americans have overrun their urban habitat with too many numbers and with too much crowding of their regional cultural differences. The information explosion of the mass media—the computers that enable the mass circulation of magazines, the electronic media that enable information from radio and television to be ingested without previous training in literacy—make for a stimulation of wants difficult to satisfy by existing authority. Americans have overrun their government with elevated expectations and enlarged demands for self determination by groups with newfound self-identities discovered via the media.

The mix of urban, racial and authority problems is being addressed at the federal level by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), with the support of the President's Office of Science and Technology. The challenge to engineering education is to find a role in

a whole complex of related activities, from methods of organizing fiscal, legal, architectural, managerial and engineering expertise for the purpose of rehabilitating the urban environment.

If the universities will not gear themselves to education, research and application within the field of urbanology, competition with private think tanks will steal engineering students and lower engineering enrollment still further. Think tanks belong to the military-industrial complex, which commands a 40 billion dollar year business under one interlocking system of management.

Up until now we have allowed technology to shape our urban environment, but soon we must allow social needs to shape technology. The knowledge for this control over technology must be mobilized in the technical schools, or else the private think tanks will impose urban development in the name of their corporate patrons. Technology is perhaps the one aspect of culture that can link the self-determination of local groups with government authority, *via* academic research and application sponsored under HUD or some other federal agency. But if technology is to become a means of organizing knowledge in the name of resolving public issues, and if it is to attract students now entering the liberal arts, it must be redefined as a social science, drawing upon the physical sciences as an information service. Only then will we have a humane technology that builds for the people who have to live with the results of technology. If the technical schools do not revise their myth of technology, like Azumi-zi they will have no choice but to throw themselves into the Dynamo in Martyrdom—that is, suffer the death of academic engineering rather than renounce the old myth of technology as an application of pure science.

—Leon Stover

AMAZING STORIES

THE FUTURE IN BOOKS



John Brunner: *THE JAGGED ORBIT*. Ace Science Fiction Special No. 38120, New York, 1969. 397 pages, paper, 95¢

In the past ten years, while various people were either pointing with pride at or viewing with alarm the mostly incoherent chunks of dated experiments epitomized by the new *New Worlds*, what appears to be a genuine change in both auctorial approach and reader popularity has been taking place in science fiction. It is best exemplified by the careers—or anyhow, courses to date—of John Brunner, Samuel R. Delany, Philip Jose Farmer, Frank Herbert and Roger Zelazny. Here I shall be talking mostly about Brunner, partly because he is the one of the five I admire most, and partly because I am supposed to be reviewing his book here, not anybody else's; but a few cross-references are bound to creep in. Where they do not, I will ask you to fill in the blanks for yourselves.

All five began with somewhat idiosyncratic styles but with work that could otherwise be described as conventional, though highly skillful. Each exhausted, in his own way, and at various lengths, the resources of the conventional with a

single climactic conventional work, this in Brunner's case being an outright perfect short story called *The Totally Rich*. Each then went on to write a very long story, or a novel, which resembled a mainstream novel of the conventional kind in that it paid far more attention to character (real character, not the funny hats that pass for it in most s-f that is praised for its "characterization") than we are accustomed to find even in the best s-f; Brunner wrote several of these, the first of which was called *TELEPATH* in Britain and *THE WHOLE MAN* here; another was *THE PRODUCTION OF TIME*.

So far so good; other people, too, have followed much this same path, but stopped. The five I have named did not stop. Instead, they all took the same, far from inevitable next step. They went on to the Novel of Apparatus.

The temptation to say "they all fell into the same trap" must be tempered by the fact that all have won their chiefest recognition from the Novel of Apparatus, which means that other writers, and many fans, don't regard it as a trap at all. They like it. Four of the

five have taken trophies for their essays in this form. At this writing, STAND ON ZANZIBAR has not taken any trophy, but I'd be surprised if it doesn't in due course, and Brunner has already been invited to lecture on it before a Modern Language Ass'n meeting, which is a pretty sizable First in itself.

Here is another such work—a kind of capsule edition of STAND ON ZANZIBAR, like it embodying almost none of Brunner's strengths, loaded to the gunwales with typographical tricks, as full of compulsive cuteness as Stalin-era Shostakovitch, its very length pretentious and inhibiting, containing a vast cast of characters all of whom are in the end retrogressions to the funny-hat school, and the whole thing a betrayal of a major sensibility of which we had a right to expect real achievement, not simply an immense snow-job.

Why are recent science-fiction writers doing this kind of thing, and why do articulate readers abase themselves before it? I can only offer some guesses, but they are not all mine. The first, in fact, is Kingsley Amis', who suggests that s-f writers of a certain stripe get a special satisfaction out of making such constructs—"adult, or nearly adult, versions of that interest that induces children to draw elaborate maps of imaginary islands" (NEW MAPS OF HELL). No doubt this is a good enough partial explanation; but Amis' adducing as an example the appendix to A CASE OF CONSCIENCE (1958) leads me both to examine my own motives, and to reason out (if I can) the reason why the *readers* like it:

It is, I think, something much more childish—a striving for impressiveness of manner, in terms which the lay reader can accept. We seem all to yearn, in our various ways, to be respectable, to be

told that we are as good as the mainstream, that we are inheritors of Kafka or Daniel Defoe or James Joyce or John dos Passos or (even) J. R. R. Tolkien, or anybody else from whom we can borrow glory by an imitation of his manner; or by some other show that we really do know what we are doing (such as a show of having worked out our sciences, or having constructed some vast historical parallel). We write endless prefaces and afterwords; we overpraise each other; the snow it blows, and blows, and blows.

I suggest that this is the worst kind of dead end. We would get farther, and maintain our self-respect (the only kind of respect that counts) a lot better by following our medium to its own conclusions, and leaving the past where it lies. John Brunner has been praised in some quarters for having had the insight to see that the technique of dos Passos' U.S.A. was peculiarly adaptable to science fiction; but the preliminary question should have been, not, Should I adopt someone else's manner for my own purposes, but, Was U.S.A. itself worth writing in the first place? A man of Brunner's gifts should have seen *ab initio* that U.S.A. was a stillbirth even in its originator's hands, just as Farmer should have seen that Joyce, while permanently alive himself, worked his technique to its ultimate dead end and cannot be imitated by anybody in any genre.

I could not finish STAND ON ZANZIBAR, since I disliked everybody in it and I was constantly impeded by the suspicion that Brunner was writing not for himself but for a Prize. I did finish THE JAGGED ORBIT, but only because it was mercifully shorter. I recommend against it, and all others of its ilk. Most of them were dead ends before

their authors and their enthusiasts had even been born.

By this I do not mean to align myself with (1) anybody who thinks science fiction should never change, (2) anybody who thinks all experimenters among science-fiction writers are putting us on, or (3) anybody who wants to conduct an extermination campaign of any kind on any side. I maintain only that sensibilities of the high order that Brunner has shown should follow their own laws and make their own experiments, not let themselves be overwhelmed by the shadows of old monuments and the adumbrations of respectability. Above all, the worst motto I can imagine for science fiction is contained in the endorsement of Tom Disch on the back of this very book: "The styling is Now." The only thing we know about Now is that one second later it is Yesterday; and in both these recent Brunner Novels of Apparatus, it is the Yesterday of the 1920's.

—James Blish

John Brunner: STAND ON ZANZIBAR. Doubleday, N.Y., 1968. 524 pages, hardbound, \$6.95.

At the core of every science fiction novel, from the most sublime to the sheerest pandering drivel, is an attempt to resolve a paradox which in the final analysis may in fact be unresolvable. Unlike the "mainstream" novelist, the sf novelist *really* starts out with blank paper: he must not only create characters, theme, forces of destiny and plot but (unlike the mainstream novelist) must create from scratch a universe entire in which character, plot and destiny interact with each other and with the postulated environment. This is why that rare creation, the genuine sf novel (a work of art that is both genuinely sf and genuinely a novel) is, all other things being

equal, a higher form of art than the "mainstream" novel. (Of course you knew that already on some visceral level, else why would you be reading this publication?) However, the infuriating thing about writing sf novels is that the novelistic imperatives of plot, destiny and character are in conflict with the sf imperative of universe-creation. While one is in the process of creating in detail the sf context, the characters and plot hang in limbo; while one is advancing plot and characterization, one's grip on one's created universe tends to loosen. This explains, among other things: why New Wave advocates dislike "old thing" novels in which the sf imperatives over-ride the novelistic imperatives; why "Old Thing" fans dislike hard-core "New Wave" in which traditional novelistic imperatives over-ride the sf imperative; why so few sf novels satisfy both camps; and why God felt constrained to rest on the seventh day—creating a universe and real people is no mean task, even if one has the advantage of omnipotence.

Basically, sf novelists have attempted to solve this fundamental problem in one of two ways. The first alternative is to hold up plot and characterization here and there and throw in chunks of background either with overt author-exposition or long quotes from non-existent books or worse still by having one's characters describe the scientific and historical background of the universe they inhabit to each other. The second alternative is to stay strictly within the viewpoints of the characters and let the reader pick up the background by a kind of osmosis, by letting him live the lives of real people as they move through their environment. It would seem that these two techniques or an unsatisfactory combination of the two are the only ways of writing a genuine science

fiction novel.

Now, however, John Brunner has come along with *STAND ON ZANZIBAR* and invented a third alternative.

One needs no crystal ball to predict that much will be made of this book for the wrong reasons. It is probably the longest sf novel ever written and there is some mysterious force operating in the sf field that tends to create a worship of gigantism. But after all, a long dreadful novel has no real advantage over a short dreadful novel except in the eyes of a confirmed masochist. Perhaps the worship of huge sf novels is merely an extention of the traditional American equation of quantity equals quality. So, in a way, it's a shame that *STAND ON ZANZIBAR* is so long because it is not its length which makes it an important book but its form.

In the book itself, Brunner calls *STAND ON ZANZIBAR* a "non-novel." He has a point. *STAND ON ZANZIBAR* is a literary construct consisting of one novel, several short stories, a series of essays and a lot of what can only be called *schticks* intercut and put together like a film. *STAND ON ZANZIBAR* is not a novel; it is a film in book form.

This is stated quite candidly in the table of contents (one of the longest table of contents extant). Brunner lists the sections of the book that constitute the novel about the two main viewpoint characters, Donald Hogan and Norman House, under the heading "Continuity." The essays are listed under "Context." The independent short stories about minor characters who inhabit the world of 2010 (and which have only tangential relationships in most cases to the "Continuity" novel) are listed under "Tracking with closeups." The *schticks*, the bits and pieces of such things as headlines, tv shows, commercials, quotes from

books, etc. are listed under "The Happening World." What we have here is the cinematic technique of the split-screen applied to the "novel".

Perhaps the only way to discuss such a book is to borrow some of Brunner's own technique.

Context.

The world of 2010 is overpopulated. An interminable semi-war is being waged by the US and China for control of the Pacific Basin through a series of proxies. (Sound familiar?) Eugenic legislation is prevalent throughout the Developed World. A Developing Country which fits the description of Indonesia but which Brunner calls "Yatakang" is developing a program for producing genetically-engineered supermen, the news of which program is producing political turmoil in the developed countries where the masses chafe under the eugenic legislation which forbids people with proscribed genes from having children. In the tiny impoverished African country of Beninia, the Shinkas, despite their squalid condition, have somehow achieved a tranquil "noble savage" culture.

Continuity.

Norman House and Donald Hogan are roomates in super-crowded New York. House, an "Afram" (Brunner's 2010 slang for Negro, a mistake only a non-American would make), works for a large corporation which closes a deal with the dying President of Beninia to develop that country, a kind of benevolent neo-colonialism. House is appointed to head the corporation's effort in Beninia; in Beninia it is discovered by Chad Mulligan (a sociologist whose works are quoted extensively in "Context" and "The Happening World") that the Shinkas' non-violent nature is a genetic mutation.

Meanwhile, Hogan is activated as a

kind of CIA agent, "eptified" into a human killing machine and sent to Yatakang to kill Dr. Sugalguntung, the key scientist in the Yatakangi superman breeding program.

After many twists and turns in plot and motivation, Hogan achieves his end, which, in light of the discovery of the "peace" gene in Beninia, has ironic but not totally tragic overtones.

The Happening World.

Legalized pot. Bizarre parties. Chad Mulligan's HIPCRIME VOCAB. Various sinister psychedelics. Yonderboys. Shalmaneser, the conscious(?) computer. Shiggies. Bleeders. Muckers. Codpieces. The shuggy circuit. SCANALYZER. TV shows.

Tracking with closeups.

Chad Mulligan, sociologist playing at misanthropy and not making it. Various old colonial types dying to get in on the Beninia project. Eric Ellerman blackmailed, then murdered by yonderboys. Poppy Shelton, pregnant flower-child taking drugs so that her unborn child will never have to see the dreary straight world. Bennie Neskes, psychedelic vegetable. Guinevere Steel, Bitch-priestess of fashion.

Brunner has dealt with the paradox of sf imperatives versus novelistic imperatives by the simple process of dissociation. He gives the reader background in the "Context" and "The Happening World" sections. He writes a rather conventional unexceptional and unexceptionable sf novel in the "Continuity" sections. He gives his world depth and extention in the "Tracking with closeups" sections.

"Continuity" with a minor rewrite could've been published as an ordinary novel. "Tracking with closeups" could be re-edited (in the filmic sense) into a series of conventional sf stories.

IF STAND ON ZANZIBAR proves any-
THE FUTURE IN BOOKS

thing, it proves that the whole can be greater than the sum of its parts. None of the sections (the unedited film) are particularly brilliant by themselves. The total book is. It's all in the editing. William Burroughs produces slices of his novels by randomly cutting up pieces of coherent prose. The result is gibberish which adds nothing to the coherent sections of his novels. Brunner takes a lot of ordinary sf and speculative non-fiction and edits it non-randomly into a brilliant non-novel.

John Brunner would make one hell of a film editor.

STAND ON ZANZIBAR is a brilliant and dangerous book. Brilliant because with it Brunner has invented a whole new way of writing book-length sf.

Dangerous because what he has done looks so damned easy. I predict (while hoping I am wrong) that a lot of other sf writers are going to try their hands at books like this. It looks like the easy way out: write a conventional sf novel, a few short stories with the same background and a bunch of essays, and put together a most successful novel from them. Then go collect your Hugo.

But unfortunately, most sf writers (and especially those who would stoop to copying another man's success, the trend-riders) are most deficient in that area of which Brunner proves himself the master in ZANZIBAR: sense of structure. Brunner is not a great master of plotting. Yet he has written a great book. So there is the temptation to conclude that he has simply invented a gimmick which lesser writers can copy.

But what he has really done is to have applied a film technique to prose fiction and it worked because Brunner has a great talent for film editing, whether he ever thought of it in those terms or not.

Those writers who believe it was all

done with mirrors proceed at their own peril. Not to mention at the peril of their readers. — Norman Spinrad

Piers Anthony: *OMNIVORE*. Ballantine, N.Y., 1968. 221 pp., paper, 75¢

This novel centers on Nacre, a planet which receives little direct sunlight at the surface. There is a complex ecological chain; plants exist only in the upper atmosphere, where as microorganisms they gain mass until they drift down to the surface and serve as a food supply.

Nacre's valleys support a wealth of life forms, all derived from fungus. The connection between the ordinary molds we see on Earth and the incredible intelligent mantas of Nacre (which can run 60 mph on one foot) isn't obvious; it would've been interesting to see the author sketch out some physiological details. Still, the bizarre ecology is fascinating.

Piers Anthony begins by involving us with three characters who have survived a hike on the surface of Nacre and brought back eight mantas to Earth. We get to know each character in turn as he relates his portion of the story of their survival; each of the three is real, warm and involving. They tell their tales, along with a textbook full of background biological detail that Anthony delivers almost painlessly—fungi are more important to us all than you'd ever expect—to a hardnosed government agent named Subble.

There are pleasant bits of business along the way; the author is knowledgeable and he can show the three survivors as people who have interests and know things, not as just another set of precisely calculated neuroses. But once they are presented Anthony soon discards them, as though he fears the reader has seen enough of that one and might be getting bored.

Instead we focus increasingly on Subble, as humdrum and unbelievable a superman as a 1935 pulp magazine hero.

There are many ways to make a reader care about how a book ends: involve him in the action, so he wonders how the twists and turns of plot will work out; get him to feel the characters as real people, so that he cares about their fortunes; arouse his intellectual curiosity by dropping clues along the path, in order to give him a problem to solve.

This last is the puzzle story. The Sherlock Holmes yarns are such.

In sf they are probably the easiest form to write, aside from space opera. Just acquaint yourself with a specialized field of knowledge and do some elementary extrapolation. Then sprinkle hints through your book and let the characters tear their hair trying to find the solution (in *OMNIVORE* Subble finally takes LSD for inspiration). Finally, allow one of them, with a flash of brilliance, to unravel everything in the last three pages of the book.

OMNIVORE isn't that bad. The basic puzzle is rather simple-minded but if handled well it might have clicked. Anthony doesn't give it a chance. All the important conclusions are reached off stage, the ends are tidied up with a lecture and the reader is hustled out the exit.

This is unfair treatment. The reader paid 75¢ and he deserves a conclusion befitting the careful work that went into other parts of the book. Along the way he has seen a quite fascinating alien ecology slowly unveiled—it's unfortunate that this solid background, because it contains all the clues to the puzzle, must carry such a heavy load of plot interest. There are interesting people to meet in here, and ideas to mull over. The author has a sure and perceptive grasp of character, except when he manu-

factures a stock superman to hold the story's spotlight on the infernal puzzle.

But it all adds up to less than it should. **OMNIVORE** is a book that could have gone further if the author had let go the leash on his talent and forgotten the traditional strictures of the puzzle story.

—Greg Benford

Fred Saberhagen: BROTHER ASSASSIN. Ballantine Books No. 72018, New York, 1969. 222 pages, paper, 75¢

This, an expanded version of a novel that appeared in *Galaxy* in 1967, is another in Saberhagen's series about the berserkers—spacefaring machines programmed to destroy all life. In this one the berserkers, besieging a human-occupied planet, have resorted to time travel, attempting to change history so as to make the defenders' very existence impossible.

It is not really a novel in any formal sense. The enemy machines make three attempts—once in prehistory, once on the life of someone rather like Lief Ericsson, and once on the course of the trial of someone a great deal more than a little like Galileo—and each of these episodes is complete in itself. They are loosely connected by a lukewarm love story, and by the assumption that if three berserker time-assaults can be frustrated, the humans can locate their staging area in the past and put them out of business.

This assumption is of course arbitrary, but it might nevertheless have imposed at least some sense of urgency and direction on the book as a whole had the author given it enough emphasis. Instead, it is brought up several times casually and then forgotten; it isn't even mentioned at the book's end. The love story is pallid and is not so much a plot thread as it is stuffing, pushed into holes whenever something interesting isn't going on.

So the book remains three novelettes, of varying interest. Not much ingenuity has gone into the first one, where the confrontation with the berserker's killing machine in prehistoric times takes the form of a sort of prolonged wrestling match. The second is more fun, since the devices the berserker tries are more ingenious and there is considerable politicking and playing with paradoxes. How well you like the third will depend, I think, on how familiar you are with the facts of Galileo's trial and recantation, and how badly you want to see them retold under a different name; but again, the berserker's method of trying to change the outcome is a fine idea, and a side-plot involving a near-duplicate of St. Francis of Assisi (who on Earth died 350 years before Galileo was born) provides an even better surprise.

The writing is standard, competent stuff, workmanlike but not colorful enough to help the reader over the dull spots in the plotting. Considered purely as action s-f in the tradition of Doc Smith and the early Campbell, it is slow-moving, an inevitable consequence of having blown what was originally an interesting concept up beyond its tolerances. I have not read the shorter *Galaxy* version, but I strongly suspect that it was the better-paced of the two.

—Wm. Atheling, Jr.

Hank Stine: SEASON OF THE WITCH. Essex House No. 0112, North Hollywood, California, 1968. 224 pages, paper, \$1.95

Last issue I remarked upon Philip Jose Farmer's **IMAGE OF THE BEAST**, from the same publisher. When I received a copy of **SEASON OF THE WITCH**, I approached it with some forebodings, despite or perhaps because of the presence of an afterword by Harlan Ellison which reads like a frenzied sermon in the

find old tradition of Hellfire and Damnation. To be frank, I expected another novel of negligible merit, but copiously filled with pornographic clichés.

Had that been the case, I would probably not bothered reviewing the book. This is a magazine devoted primarily to science fiction, and if your main interest is pornography, I can assure you that (thus far) the mixture of sf and pornography has been of no benefit to the latter and you would be best advised to stick to the straight thing. Happily, *SEASON OF THE WITCH* is, if not lip-smackingly good pornography, a reasonably good sf book, and a rather better novel *qua* novel.

The basic story is that a man is punished for murdering a woman by sacrificing his own body (to a person of greater value to society whose body has aged and is dying) and being forced to inhabit the body of the woman he murdered (her body being salvageable). The novel deals with the protagonist's adjustments to his new psychological and physiological role as a woman. Viewed within these specific terms, it is insightful and successful. Stine never offers an explicit sexual scene in standard cliche pornographical terms—each one of his descriptions brings personal and original observations into play. Many of these observations are not erotic—they may even strike some readers as anti-erotic—but they ring with truth, and as such distinguish the book. This novel comes much closer to being a genuine work of erotic *realism* than any other I can recall. It definitely speaks to the faults in Farmer's unfortunate book.

However, viewed as science fiction, the book has its failures. The principle failure, I think, is an inadequately realized world of tomorrow. Stine makes a few bows to future technology, has a few changes made in the landscape by

a never-described war which has, miraculously, left the world underpopulated without otherwise seeming to have touched it, but for the most part he is describing the world of today—not tomorrow. This is particularly obvious in early parts of the book, and the nagging awareness of it was always in the back of my mind as I read through the book. The result is a schizoid quality—a sense that the book is alternately occurring in an ill-defined future, and yet that it is taking place today.

Only one piece of extrapolation works: the extrapolation of the drug-culture, and the implied legalization of most common drugs, marijuana among them. Drugs play a fairly large part in the course of the book, since it is under the influence of an illegal drug that the protagonist unwittingly kills his sex partner.

And here another flaw intrudes: the protagonist is presented in a sympathetic light—the murder he commits is one for which he is clearly not responsible (the woman supplied the drug)—and yet the “punishment” he receives is given to be an extreme one. The implications of the opening sections are that this future society is closely policed, and that the police have broad discretionary powers. Yet, we never see them again after they have played their part. Indeed, once the protagonist's mind-personality-soul-whatwillyou has been transferred into the body of his victim, he is apparently totally abandoned by society, without help towards rehabilitation or readjustment, left to cope for himself in an alien body. His confusion and disorientation are convincingly portrayed, but yet I wondered: *why?*

The answer that strikes me is that Stine wanted to write a novel about a man who woke up one day in a woman's body, because the topic fascinated him (as it has indeed many male auth-

ors—L. Frank Baum dedicated two books, *THE LAND OF OZ* and *THE ENCHANTED ISLAND OF YEW*, to the notion of a male in a female body or vice/versa—although of course not with the same attention to detail). The body of Stine's novel lies in the (male) protagonist's response to the biological and physical needs forced upon him by his (female) body, and the transformation of his personality from male-oriented to female-oriented. The trappings, the *why* of it and the *how*, seem to have been after-the-fact rationalizations, and they suffer for it, since they point to implications which do not fit with the basic theme Stine has chosen to explore. Perhaps a straight fantasy explanation might have been more suitable—it would have allowed the actual use of today's society, for example, if the protagonist had simply awakened one morning in a different body.

To Stine's credit, he has tried to write a novel, rather than a shoddy piece of voyeurism. However—and perhaps because this is his first novel—he has delivered somewhat less than he initially seemed to promise. The opening chapters following the transformation are excellent (although it does seem to me that Stine views all men as stags in rut a bit more than is actually the case), and the transition from male-pronoun to second-person narration to female-pronoun is effective. But Stine never once actually comes to grips with the implications of homosexuality in his (male) protagonist's acceptance of a literally female role—even though it might have added much depth to his characterization. Instead, the protagonist simply begins to perform as a female, and then as if attitude followed function, begins thinking (of *herself*) as a female.

Later portions of the book are accel-

lerated, months condensed into a few pages, and quite suddenly we are viewing the protagonist from a much more exterior viewpoint. I wonder if the actual task of empathizing with his protagonist's final emotional transformation into a woman was more than Stine could manage. The ending, in which the (now) woman accepts herself and her pregnancy and coming motherhood, is intellectually satisfying, but a bit too pat, too neatly put. She is by now only a tiny figure on a distant stage, and the immediacy of the first part of the book lies well behind us.

I must, finally, remark upon the writing.

Stine would appear to be a hyperflorid stylist, and he is much given to long passages of the following sort:

The hot, denigrating, sun-blasted, blood-sucking outside air dies out in the re-processed, supercooled, cyclone darkness of the bar, vanishing as the last sliver of light is forever, undeniably, finally stoppered by the automatic, swingshut closing of the door behind you as you enter the rubber-plant and worn leather interior of the hotel bar, knowing that this is it, here and now, and if here and now fails there is no other way to turn or try to turn and that the men on the other side of the dazzling dimness that blinds your eyes had better notice, sit up and notice you and this, you hope, knockout body and, God, kissable face, and large, maybe, breasts, because if they, one of them, with their backs all to you, but faces reflected in the mirror . . . etc.

In its full, published length, the sentence quoted runs twenty-nine lines, and almost a full page. I found it by opening

the book at random (page 66).

Occasionally Stine's use of these runaway sentences is effective. The opening Prologue makes extremely effective use of shifting images and metaphors to delineate the protagonist's drugged condition (although it certainly throws a difficult chunk of prose at the reader before he really knows how to come to grips with it). There are sections of terse and objective prose, but not often enough—not enough to give the necessary punctuation to the book's flow. Too often it seems Stine simply lets his typewriter run on and on and on and on and . . . often with dazzling or compelling imagery, but sometimes simply babbling, taking the easy way out, hoping to overcome a sticky scene with a confusion of words.

(Continued from page 18)

had been only about two-thirds of what was expected.

Curiously he felt no guilt. It was a thing he had done, a decision he'd made, that had gone slightly awry.

And that would have been the end of it, but on the night before they were to leave he stood in his suit outside. For the last time he looked up at the one infant moon, trying to decide what Milton Tosti was for himself alone.

Then, suddenly, along the side of the hill in front of him there was a speck of fire, then a line of fire, coming closer.

He rang the hatch alarm and, at almost the same time, saw there was no need.

They came.

They bore torches, but each bore something else.

They carried great bundles of the plants, not stunted and dwarfed, but bush sized, more plants than all of the searchers had ever seen. And the plants were in rock receptacles and they were growing.

Tosti felt, rather than saw, Doctor

His dialogue is largely notable by its absence throughout most of the book.

But all these criticisms aside, *SEASON OF THE WITCH* is a rich, uneven, and probably rewarding book. It is a book which fails, where it fails, from ambitions set too high and represents more a failure of achievement than of purpose. What Stine succeeds in doing is the telling of a fairly engrossing and unusual story, littered with a number of genuine insights into the differences and similarities of maleness and femaleness, and genuinely a work of erotic realism, written far above the standards of pornography. I suspect that if he can learn a few more chords for his stylistic orchestrations, he will be a writer to watch, either within or beyond our field.

—Ted White

Hapan at his side.

"Jesus," Doctor Hapan said softly.

The creatures sat the plants down carefully and went back the way they had come.

One waited. The rest trailed fire back up the hill.

Tosti looked at the pile of plants, plants that had been taken living from the ground, plants that might solve the problem and he looked at the creature who waited.

"Knana?" he asked softly, only loud enough for the creature to hear. And he knew that he belonged here. This race had no one, and the terrible need of someone if they were to survive.

The other touched him on the suit and the graceful appendages moved and the eyes looked deep into his helmet and seemed satisfied with what was there.

There was a whole string of soft, melodious words, but only one meant much to Tosti and that one was very near the end.

" . . . Knana . . . "

—Joe L. Hensley

THE CLUB HOUSE

by John D. Berry

As the Kindly Editor has suggested that I preface these reviews with some general remarks, I would like to clear up something I neglected to explain last issue. That is the difference between a "genzine" and an "apazine."

"Genzine," as you might guess, is a contraction; the full germ would be "general circulation fanzine." In recent years it has been corrupted to mean "general *interest* fanzine," and you will see it used both ways, but when I use the word I mean its original meaning. For, you see, it is a necessary opposite for "apazine," which means a fanzine produced for an apa. "Apa" stands for "amateur press association" (or "amateur publishing association" or maybe "antiballistic paranoid aardvarks"), which is an organization of fans who all send their fanzines in to a central mailer, who then puts them together into one mailing and sends them out to all members at fixed dates. Apas may be large or small, highly organized or incredibly loose-knit, but they all have at least one thing in common: the members tend to publish fanzines that are directed specifically towards that apa. So we get apazines, as opposed to genzines. Now often they overlap, when a fan sends his apazine to friends outside the apa, or when someone circulates his genzine through an apa as well. Still, they are useful categories. And now you'll know what I'm talking about when I mention genzines and apazines.

SHANGRI L'AFFAIRES #75, Dec. 1968; 50¢ or 4/\$2; quarterly, from Ken Rudolph,

745 N. Spaulding Ave., Los Angeles, Calif. 90046; 72 pp., multilith.

SHANGRI L'AFFAIRES, better known as SHAGGY, is the official club fanzine of the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society, which I believe is the world's oldest fanclub (over 35 years). In the past, SHAGGY has ranged from poor to brilliant, and it has seen both periods of frequent, regular publication and years of suspended animation. Last spring it came out of one such period of suspension; the last previous issue had been #71, which came out three years earlier and was the last flickering gasp of a long renaissance. Since 1965, the membership of the LASFS has seen a considerable turnover, and in 1968 they decided to revive SHAGGY.

The first new issue was not all that good, but it showed a great deal of enthusiasm and awoke nostalgia in the fanzine's old readers. It also sparked controversy, as the older fans objected to the new format: SHAGGY had in the past always been mimeographed, but now it was being printed by multilith, and the entire appearance was changed. The second revival issue was a disappointment, as the quality did not improve and the editors were struggling unsuccessfully with their new printing process. For the third new issue, #74, they decided to print it on a sort of 3/4-size paper, and for the first time they used artwork and layout that combined well with the multilith printing to produce a very attractive package. And this brings us to the current issue, #75.

SHAGGY seems to be the first fanzine

to truly master the multolith process, although it is not the first fanzine to try. #75 shows that the previous issue was not just a fluke; the editors have found the way to integrate the old and the new and produce a fanzine that avoids the pitfall of feeling cold and formal. There is some extremely fine artwork in here, and very little that is poor. The written material is varied, but on the whole I feel it achieves a feeling of easy fannishness without giving the impression of trying too hard that has characterized some attempts at fannishness, including some of my own. SHAGGY is very much influenced by the fact that most of the team of LASFans who put it together and contribute to it are young fans, involved in the current rock/head scene. Naturally it's oriented in this direction, with reviews and discussions of rock music and science fiction, and articles touching on the current drug scene. In this vein is the article, "Beatles, Brahms, and Bach Again," by John Berry (a Northern Irish fan of considerable fame and standing, who unfortunately just happens to have the same name as I; not the same middle initial, though). It is a fairly straight-forward article about Berry's interests in music and the links between classical, rock, and science fiction.

There are analytical articles in SHAGGY. There is humor. There is fannish fiction (which is something quite different from amateur science fiction, a blight that happily usually affects only the rankest crudzines). There is fannishness. What the whole adds up to is rather hard to define; the letterhacks have been trying for four issues now. But the fanzine is certainly featuring some fine material: the long fannish column in this issue by Richard Bergeron, along with a series of photo-collages by the same man, are

fascinating; Larry Janifer's discussion of comedy in science fiction is absorbing, and in passing touches upon the nature of laughter; and the four pages of cartoons by Bill Rotsler and Tim Kirk, "Do You Believe in Dragons?," is entertaining and brings two of fandom's best cartoonists together. There is also mediocre material in SHAGGY; the letters are often not well enough edited, and Lon Atkins' fannish story, "Convergence," I liked but am not really sure of. Still, SHAGGY is a pretty good fanzine, and it's going places. *Recommended.*

THE SQUIRREL'S TALE, 1962 TAFF Report; \$1.25 by mail, which money goes to the Trans Atlantic Fan Fund; available from Bruce Pelz, 308 Westwood Plaza, Los Angeles, Calif. 90024; 46 pp., mimeographed.

Last issue I explained TAFF, so I won't go into it again. This is the trip report that Ron Ellik wrote after his TAFF-sponsored journey to the British National Convention in Harrogate, Yorkshire, in 1962. Ron was an extremely well-known and well-liked fan, a young man who had been a leading figure in the fannish resurgence in California fandom in the late fifties; unfortunately, he died in a car crash in January of last year. This TAFF report had been serialized in SHAGGY in 1962-3, but it was only after Ron's death that it was finally gathered into one volume and published, the work being completed by Bruce Pelz.

It's a good trip report. Certainly almost any fannish trip report is vastly superior to the majority of mundane travelogues, even without the added spice of knowing (or knowing of) many of the people involved. THE SQUIRREL'S TALE is hardly the best of the many TAFF reports to have been published over the years, but it is still in-

teresting and well-done, with a well-trained eye cocked for the humorous. There is perhaps a little too much "we did this, and then we did that" to it, but Ron captured several fans very well on paper, and such incidents as Ron Bennett trying to cope with an untamed geyser (a British contraption for heating cold water) make the whole thing well worth reading. It is illustrated with Bjo Trimble's fine cartoons, which perpetrate the long-standing fannish joke that personified Ron as a squirrel; anyone who met him could see the resemblance, and the joke provided reams and reams of material for fannish humorists.

THE SQUIRREL'S TALE will provide a few hours enjoyable reading, and TAFF is a worthwhile cause to support. Recommended.

ID #3, winter, 1968; 50¢; quarterly, from Jim Reuss, 304 South Belt West, Belleville, Ill. 62221; 44 pp., mimeographed.

This comparatively new fanzine has been steadily improving with each issue; #1 showed promise, and since then Jim Reuss has been fulfilling it. I expect it will continue to get better in the future. ID is one of the St. Louis fanzines; it has a flavor in common with most of the other fanzines coming out of the very active St. Louis fandom, although of course each has its own unique outlook.

The material is pretty far-ranging. There is a very funny column by J.S. Dorr, including such subjects as the man who yelled at the top of his lungs, "Pregnancy and compatibility have nothing whatsoever in common!" and the availability of petrified dinosaur manure. Chris Couch, another young St. Louis fan and the fanzine reviewer for Hank Luttrell's OSFAN, contributes a rather short article on fannish newszines, which unfortunately degenerates into a listing

of current newszines without getting very deeply into the genre. There is a long article called "One Nation, Underground," by James Schumacher, alias "the Left Shoe," which discusses the current state of the revolution in America; the article is written in such a way as to touch off the emotions of those who don't share sympathy with the New Left, and although it's little more than a report of progress and lack of same and a call for more love in the world, the article comes off badly. Still, it is an area for discussion.

The remainder of ID is mostly reviews (of books, of fanzines, of ROSEMARY'S BABY) and a well-edited lettercolumn. The fanzine is good and getting better; watch it. Recommended.

PERIHELION #6, Jan./Feb., 1969; 50¢, 6/\$3, or 12/\$6; quarterly, from Sam Belotto, Jr., 40-46B 77th St., Elmhurst, N.Y. 11373, and Eric M. Jones; 40 pp., photo-offset.

PERIHELION would like to be a prozine. This copy came to AMAZING's editor, and I've never received the magazine myself, but I have heard fans chorle over its pretensions and poor quality.

Judging by my brief glances at previous issues, I suspect that PERIHELION has improved. It certainly features a few worthwhile things, mostly some excellent artwork by Vaughn Bode and others. (Bode's comic strip, "Tubs," is extremely good, as are most all Bode strips, and the cover of this issue is a blown-up illo for the strip.) But the magazine still has pretensions to being a professional journal of discussion of science fiction, and in contrast to its ambitions, the sloppiness of its presentation is laughable. The layout is spotty and derivative, and some of the artwork is the equal of the worst fanzine

art.

PERIHELION shares with the rankest crudzines a penchant for printing amateur (or almost-amateur) fiction, and a generally gosh-wow outlook. There is one article of interest, a look into the future development of rocket engines, although it suffers from being an essentially dry, inert subject. The interview with Ed Ferman, editor of THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION, is not edited enough to make a rambling talk come out well on paper, and the questions asked by PERIHELION's interviewer are remarkably insipid—he asks all the questions that are currently being talked to death in science fiction circles, and of course gets no answer that hasn't been said before. In fact, that seems to be the great *forte* of PERIHELION: restatement of the obvious. Robert E. Toomey's article on Sex in Science Fiction is remarkably superficial, again contributing nothing new, and the editor comes through with an article on mythology in sf that manages to drop a truly astounding number of names without saying anything at all.

I hope to see the next issue of PERIHELION because I want to see the conclusion of Bode's strip. But for no other reason. *Forget it.*

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #29, Jan., 1969; 50¢ or \$3 per year; bimonthly, from Richard E. Geis, P.O. Box 3116, Santa Monica, Calif. 90403; 68 pp., multilithed.

This is a solid, interesting issue of SFR, and I think it's what Geis wants a "typical" issue of the fanzine to be like. It has no one item that transcends the fanzine that contains it, as Phil Farmer's Baycon speech in the last issue did; instead, there is a large body of good material. All of the virtues and

the vices of SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW as it is currently are apparent.

There is superb cartooning by such talents as Bill Rostler, Mike Gilbert, and Tim Kirk (indeed, there is virtually no "straight" art, except for a Gilbert centerfold that is technically competent but rather unattractive), and Geis's layout sense makes the fanzine on the whole a very attractive package. The material is mostly written in an open, light-handed style, even the serious criticism. I suppose the meat of the issue lies in two articles: "The Trenchant Bludgeon," the last installment of his column that Ted White wrote before he gave it up to become editor of AMAZING and FANTASTIC; and "New World Coming," a discussion of John Brunner's *Stand on Zanzibar* by Norman Spinrad. White's column is well written, as is most of his fanzine writing, and it divides into three parts: a fascinating glimpse into his feelings on assuming the editorship of two professional sf magazines; a concluding statement in the verbal battle he has been carrying on in SFR's pages with Harry Harrison; and a fascinating, personalized report on the World Science Fiction Convention last Labor Day. Spinrad's article is basically concerned with the fact that evidently Brunner created an entirely new form of dealing with the classic science fiction paradox of trying to explain the background of an author's imaginary world and still keep the plot moving at a rapid clip. Spinrad seems to feel that Brunner has done a brilliant job of editing and arranging, and the article certainly makes me want to read the book in question. Whether a mere matter of editing, no matter how original, can really be a fundamental change or not is a question that will probably be debated heatedly in the next issue's

letter column. [A longer version of the same piece appears in our book review column this issue. —TW]

The book review section has expanded still farther, taking up 17 pages. Geis feels that this is the most important part of SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW, but I don't believe that reviews alone can sustain any large fanzine. They just aren't strong enough foundations, and this issue suffers from lack of content as a result. The rest of the written material is mostly filler, or still more reviews—as in Banks Mebane's prozine review column, or the mechanistic review of YELLOW SUBMARINE by Alexis Gilliland and that fails to convey anything of the feel of the movie. There is a very long letter column, but most of it is filled with trivia, silly bickering, or stylistic fun—again very little content. The letter-writers don't really provide much response to the articles; they are instead intent on producing froth. The froth is entertaining, though; it's when they engage in ridiculous verbal battles over what I would hope to be a dead subject (the "New Wave") that it becomes unpleasant to read.

Still, on the whole, SFR is still a diverting fanzine. *Recommended.*

WARHOON #26, Feb., 1969; 60¢; quarterly, from Richard Bergeron, 11 East 68th St., New York, N.Y. 10021; 00 pp., mimeographed.

WARHOON is moving in a new direction: it is becoming less concerned with serious discussions of science fiction and more like a "fabulous fannish fanzine." This issue adds Terry Carr to WRHN's stable of top columnists, and all its other regular writers are present except for James Blish. Yet, despite this definite trend on Bergeron's part, this is the least fannish issue since #23. It is a transi-

tional issue, to be sure; all the potential is there, but at this point it hasn't gelled yet.

Bergeron's editorial is endemic of the whole trend. It wanders about, touching on several subjects with a fannish air, but it is all superficial, albeit very well written. The three core columns—Walt Willis's "The Harp That Once or Twice," Bob Shaw's "The Mortal Gael," and Harry Warner, Jr.'s, biography of Willis—are all up to par, yet the net effect is diffuse. Willis takes a rare dive into his inner mind and explains the philosophy that motivates his actions and decisions in the world—a fascinating process, especially as it reflects on his behavior throughout his years in fandom. Warner gives another solid piece of biography; he is an amazing synthesist of material and information dredged from innumerable old fanzines. And Shaw turns in the best piece of writing he's done yet for WARHOON, with a description of several weird characters he had worked with that made me laugh out loud at several points.

Terry Carr's "the fannish i" is a look at a vast number of different phenomena, ranging from science fiction fandom to the Love Generation and New Left politics, with an eye to what they all add up to. Terry is a very fine writer, and connects the things he discusses very ably. He doesn't, however, view them at a very deep level, and I'm left with general feeling of "Yes, but there's got to be more."

"It Seems There Were Two Irishmen," by Robert Bloch, is a pun-filled review of Willis' recent Ace paperback, *The Improbable Irish* (published under the pseudonym of Walter Bryan), which is lots of fun and shows very clearly the difference between Bloch and Willis as writers. Willis is a brilliant punster and player-

with-words, but his prose is dense and thoughtful, while Bloch's, even when littered with an incredible number of puns as it is here, remains basically all on the surface. Bloch's humor has always been scattershot—that is, he drops funny lines in one after another, flying off in all directions at once, rather than concentrating on one idea and following it through. Willis's humorous lines and word-plays may be independent of each other too, but they always follow from their context, and the article or story or comment always develops from beginning to end. Willis's articles are never merely vehicles for puns and jokes. Both men's writing is highly enjoyable, but Willis writes on a higher plane of the English language.

The only other notable thing in this *WARHOON* is a long, analytical article on *YELLOW SUBMARINE* by Walter Breen, who specializes in long, analytical, and deadly serious (although good!) articles. It seems to me completely incongruous to review something as trippy as *YELLOW SUBMARINE* in the Walter Breen manner, but toward the end of the article he gets away from technicalities and delivers a couple of perceptive insights.

There are also a couple more articles, and a letter column with some fine stuff and some that I found tedious. On the whole, this issue of *WARHOON* was not up to the standards of the last couple of issues. With one exception: Bergeron's artwork and layout continues to be brilliant, and the effects he gets this issue with color, especially on the very fine cover, are wonderful. *WARHOON* is still one of the best fanzines. *Highly Recommended.*

WHAT ABOUT US GIRLS #1, Jan., 1969; 40¢; irregular, from Joyce Fisher,

4404 Forest Park, St. Louis, Mo. 63108, co-edited by Sue Robinson and Pam Janisch; 24 pp., mimeographed.

This first issue is the First Fanzine for all three editors, although Joyce Fisher has had plenty of experience in helping her husband Ray edit ODD. It is considerably better than any first issue would ever be expected to be, with superb mimeography, good art, and fine writing all the way through. It is an immensely promising fanzine, and possibly the best to come out of St. Louis fandom, except for ODD.

Each editor writes a column, and all are quite competent. Joyce Fisher is a poet whose work I admire a great deal, and her poetic sense carries over into her prose, which means she sometimes comes up with word-plays that remind me forcibly of Walt Willis. Pam Janisch writes what is basically an introduction of herself and a set of impressions of fandom and the St. Louis fans, and she does it in a pleasant anecdotal style that makes the whole thing very likeable. Sue Robinson does a similar thing, and she tells lovely stories about people like Bob Schoenfeld, who gave her a life-size picture of the Jolly Green Giant for Christmas. The remarkable thing about all this is that none of the three of them seem to take themselves or their fanzine too seriously, and all three are very talented.

There is other material, such as a recounting of a St. Louis earthquake by Pam Janisch, a rather original review of ROSEMARY'S BABY by the same person, and book and rather short fanzine reviews by various editors. The whole thing is illustrated with Pam's very fine cartoons, and the second issue is bound to be excellent. *Recommended.*

QUIP #11, Jan./Feb., 1969; 50¢; and no subscriptions; bimonthly, from Arnie

Katz, Apt. 3-J, 55 Pineapple St., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201; 50 pp., mimeographed.

A fine, solid issue of QUIP, indeed. It strikes me that with the number of issues that Arnie has published, and the amount of good-to-brilliant material included in those issues, reading through a complete file of QUIPs a few years from now is going to be a fabulous experience. And that would be true if QUIP folded tomorrow; as it is, the last few issues have been a high-water mark that seems to be continuing with no end in sight. QUIP is the foremost fannish fanzine in the old tradition.

This issue leads off with one of the best of Q's cartoon covers in a long time, and after it falls the editorial. In my last column I complained because Arnie had been writing only very short editorials lately; in this issue he begins the "Fanoclast Fanlog," a kind of fannish diary in which he relates amusing stories of the things that happen to him and reflects on the questions that come up or the fanzines that come in, day by day. It's long, and a very successful experiment. The "Fanoclast Fanlog," along with Arnie's tightly-edited letter column, should make a very solid base for each issue of QUIP.

All the regular columnists are present — and their number is swelled by one as Q adds Walt Willis to its pages. Willis contributes "Dusty Answers," a wonderful column based on his correspondence during the heyday of his early years in fandom, back in the early 1950's. Harry Warner has another approach to fan history, as he writes in "All Our Yesterdays" about an old-time fanzine: FANTASY ADVERTISER. Greg Benford's fanzine review column is rather different from usual; instead of doing in-depth reviews of two or three fanzines, he does a survey of the fanzines of 1968, which

is both perceptive and unusual, because Greg has a unique twist to his outlook on fandom that is refreshing when you've read too many pieces by people with the same viewpoint. Steve Stiles, who might be called a "columnist," gives us the second installment of his TAFF trip report, "Harrison Country"; he tends a little too much towards recounting everything with stolid chronological order, but he comes up with a number of original, fascinating observations. Willis and Stiles between them present the cream of this issue.

Arnie also has a fannish story, "The Long Shadow," which deals with the effects of suspicion in fandom, and it is one of the best pieces of fiction to appear in QUIP. (Any fiction in Q is fannish; Arnie would *never* publish amateur science fiction.) The issue is wrapped up by the letter column, which, as I said before, is very tightly edited. I'm afraid that the severe chopping of letters will prevent a real feeling of continuity; that would be unfortunate, as QUIP has featured a very fine letter column, open yet well edited, at times in the past. There is some good material in the letter column, though.

With this QUIP, for those who have responded with letters or trade fanzines rather than just with impersonal money, came THE FANNISH WORRY BOOK and FANHISTORY #4. THE FANNISH WORRY BOOK is an amusing volume, based on *The Worry Book*, by Benton and Schmidt, and a fannish parody by Dick Lupoff. Arnie says there are two kinds of worry in fandom: Basic Fannish Worry and Baroque Fannish Worry. He goes on from there to discuss and give examples of Basic and Baroque Fannish Worries, which are sometimes hilariously funny, all illustrated with the cartoons of Jay Kinney. A fine volume for some-

one who knows fandom. FANHISTORY #4, on the other hand, is actually an old fanzine. For many years, Greg and Jim Benford and later Ted White and eventually a whole slew of people published a fabulous fannish fanzine called VOID (always with Greg Benford as a co-editor). VOID had pretty well died of apathy and assorted causes in 1962, after issue #28, but #29 had been worked on and some of it had even been run off. Various fans talked of putting it out and getting it out of the way as the years passed, but it was never done. VOID #29 grew to be a fannish legend. Finally, on New Year's Eve, 1968, Arnie Katz and Ted White and I decided to publish it, and within five days it was done. It is a very fine fanzine, with editorials by all three of us plus co-editors Terry Carr and Greg Benford, columns by Harry Warner, Jr., and Bill Meyers, a suppressed editorial from the first incarnation of PSYCHOTIC by Richard E. Geis, humor by Avram Davidson, some of the best cartooning and layout in fandom, seven-year-old letters, and lots more. If VOID #29 (included as the 4th issue of FANHISTORY, which is a long story) isn't available from Arnie, some copies may be had from Ted White for 50¢ each.

With these two accoutrements, and a fine issue in itself, QUIP #11 is a complete fannish joy. *Highly Recommended.*

Other Fanzines

CRY #179-80, Feb. & Mar., 1969; 40¢ or 5/\$2; six-weekly, from Vera Heminger, 30214 108th Ave. SE, Auburn, Wash. 98002, with co-editors Elinor Busby and Wally Weber; 42 and 40 pp., respectively, multilithed. Well-known old genzine, revived and lively, but still mediocre. Improving, though.

SPECULATION #20-1, Jan. & Feb.,

1969; 35¢ or 3/\$1; irregular, from Peter R. Weston, 81 Trescott Rd., Birmingham 31, ENGLAND; 34 and 32 pp., respectively, mimeographed. Very fine journal of science fiction criticism and discussion.

CORR #1, Mar., 1969; 20¢ or 4/75¢; quarterly, from Perri Corrick, 1317 Spring St. #110, Madison, Wisc. 53715; 24 pp., mimeographed. A neofanzine.

BLACK ORACLE #1, Mar., 1969; 25¢; irregular, from C.D.M.A. Ellis, 4221 White Ave., Baltimore, Md. 21206, co-edited by Bill George; 36 1/4-size pages, offset. Devoted to horror films and such.

ALEPH NULL #1, Jan., 1969; 50¢ + a six-cent stamp; bimonthly, from Mark Gawron and Mark Barclay, 4232 N. Kedvale, Chicago, Ill. 60641; 34 pp., mimeographed. Another neozine, mostly concentrating on comics and sf.

LOOSE ENDS #1, Jan., 1969; 15¢ + a six-cent stamp, or 5/95¢; irregular, from Ed Savage, 906 Pacific St., Bakersfield, Calif. 93305; 8 pp., offset. A would-be genzine, with some emphasis on comics and other visual media.

HAVERINGS #37, Dec., 1968/Jan., 1969; 6/\$1; bimonthly, from Ethel Lindsay, Courage House, 6 Langley Ave., Surbiton, Surrey, ENGLAND (US Agent: Redd Boggs, Box 1111, Berkeley, Calif. 94701; send cash to him); 8 pp., mimeographed. Reviews of all the fanzines Ethel receives.

REASON & KNOWLEDGE #1, Mar., 1969; 35¢ or 4/\$1; irregular, from Mike Weber, Box 126, Simpsonville, S.C. 29681; 22 pp., lithographed. A self-avowed "neo-genzine." Shows some promise (meaning the editor has a sense of humor).

TANSTAAFL #7, Feb., 1969; 25¢; irregular, from John Godwin, 2426 Belvedere Dr., Wilmington, N.C. 28401; 32 pp., mimeographed. Once a neozine,

now grown a bit. Improving, with some nice layout & artwork.

NAPALM #1, Mar., 1969; 15¢; irregular, from Wally Conger, Route #1 Box 450-A, Arroyo Grande, Calif. 93420; 8 pp., mimeographed. A short fanzine of opinion and argument.

PELF #6, Feb., 1969; 10¢; irregular, from Dave Hulan, 1005 Mt. Olive Dr. #10, Duarte, Calif. 91010, co-edited by Dave Locke; 38 pp., mimeographed. General interest fanzine with a bit of momentum behind it and some interesting material.

DALLASCON BULLETIN #1, Spring, 1969; free for show of interest; quarterly, from Tom Reamy, Dallascon Bidding Committee, P.O. Box 523, Richardson, Texas 75080; 20 pp., offset. Advertising and discussion to promote Dallas in '73 worldcon bid.

ORFAN #1, Oct., 1968; 1.50 fr. or

10/16.50 fr. "a verser au ccp 1164 76 Montpellier de J. P. Cronimus"; irregular, from Jean-Paul Cronimus, 65 Impasse Bonne Brise, 30 Nimes, FRANCE; 12 pp., mimeographed. An international newszine, in French.

HECKMECK #20, Dec., 1968; no price I can find; irregular, from Mario Kwiat, 4400 Muenster/Westf., Stettiner Str. 38, GERMANY, and Manfred Kage, Schaesberg (Limburg), Achter de Winkel 41, NETHERLANDS; 48 pp., mimeographed. International genzine, in English, with letters, cartoons, ads for Heidelberg in '70, articles, etc.

LOSTWITHIEL CHECK-POINT sample issue, Dec., 1968; 15¢; irregular, from Peter Roberts, 87 West Town Lane, Bristol, BS4 5DZ, ENGLAND; 8 legal-length pp., mimeographed. Fanzine reviews, done in somewhat more length and depth than in HAVERINGS.

—John D. Berry

(Continued from page 19)

its job alone. This list does not nearly exhaust the torment the camera is put to (there's a short animation sequence, too, and other matters) but it might as well. It's sad to mention that the idea of split-screen has been so thoroughly misunderstood by this craftsman that not one single use of it is worth the labor; you keep seeing with enormous clarity how the technique *could* be effectively used, while noticing that it isn't.

But he's trying, and trying hard.

So is Claire Bloom—whose attempts are not despicable. She is given a part consisting mostly of bits and pieces, and (as Charly's teacher, lover, what-have-you) she creates a locus of emotion whenever the script can be ignored. For that matter, Lilia Skala, as Dr. Anna Strauss (the sex has been changed since Keyes in-

vented the character), works to admirable effect when allowed, and Leon Janney (Dr. Nemur) turns in at least a professionally smooth job.

But without Robertson, and without an understandable script, all this does not make up for much. My respect for the original novella is such that it is difficult for me to write this review; my respect for Robertson great enough so that I am astonished at having to do so.

Ravi Shankar's music, by the way, is wholly competent. Competence in this department is so rare that the score has been much overpraised; Mr. Shankar has built a satisfactory and professional edifice, however, and my only nagging complaint is that he seems quite content to follow the inadequacies of the script. Just following orders, I suppose.

or so you say...



Letters intended for publication should be addressed to . . . Or So You Say, c/o P.O. Box 73, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11232

Dear Editor,

Things are finally beginning to look up for AMAZING STORIES again! You've got to admit, it was looking pretty sad there for a couple of years.

I'm extremely glad to see that you put back in the letter column. Every magazine deserves one. It gives the readers a chance to vent their feelings, throw their 'brick bats' and have their names enshrined for the rest of eternity in its hallowed pages. Don't ever get rid of it.

You could improve AMAZING STORIES even more by taking a few ideas from the Granddaddy AMAZINGs. First of all, get rid of the excess printing on the spine and cover. Maybe show a few of the authors in the issue, and then let the table of contents do the rest.

The cover illustrations that you have now are okay, except for two or three things. 1) Get new covers! (They are reprints from the old AMAZINGs, aren't they?) (No. -TW) And tell who did them. 2) Have covers pertaining to the

stories inside. And what's wrong with good, old-fashioned, blood-and-guts space opera? Have some in your magazine, and put some BEMS and spaceships on your covers. They belong to sf. Just because we're about to land a couple of men on the moon is no reason that space opera can no longer exist. We live in an infinite universe. Infinite. That's a pretty big word, in meaning at least. A lot of good stories can be written around an infinite universe.

Rory Marshall

P.S.: Memo to Ed.: Get into a habit of answering letters completely. You owe it to your readers.

And here I thought I was! To answer you about our covers—At the present we are using cover paintings originally published in Europe, on European sf magazines. The reasons for this are complicated, but financial. In any case, the names of the artists are not known to us, or we would credit them. While control over the visual package of the magazine is beyond your Managing Editor, I have been able to commission stories around some of the paintings we have—and you'll be seeing the first in

our next issue, Greg Benford's "Sons of Man." In cases where this has not been possible, we've tried to use covers which are in some sense symbolic of the stories in the issue—as with this issue's, which seems to me at least loosely evocative of time-travel and Robert Silverberg's "Up The Line." We'll publish more space-opera, by the way, when someone starts writing good space-opera again. It seems rather out of style among today's authors. —TW

Dear Mr. White:

So Harrison and Malzberg are gone, and a new broom sweeps clean. I can hope, at least, that AMAZING and FANTASTIC can now be put back on their feet.

Your May editorial is more objective than those Robert Silverberg has been running insofar as the traditionalist-New Thing debate goes. Nevertheless, I shall point out my own evaluation of the New Thing for the record:

New Thing writing has *nothing whatsoever* to do with style, but it has *everything* to do with content. This is the exact opposite of what most commentators say, but most commentators are wrong.

The basis of the New Thing is what Colin Wilson refers to as the "insignificance premise," the idea that the universe is unknowable and life is meaningless—a popular notion with the "mainstream" for a long time, as you are aware.

It is the "insignificance premise" that underlies the elements that are most praised by critics favoring the New Thing—the emphasis on the primacy of evil, on anti-heroes, on plotless stories, the rejection of science in favor of mysticism, and the worship of ugliness and disaster.

Oh, the critics will be kind most of

the time to a genuine stylistic genius like Zelazny—how can they call him a hack? But all other things being equal, they always prefer stories of failure and ugliness to those with real life and beauty. The "insignificance premise" is the common denominator that underlies much-praised writers like Ballard, Disch, Ellison, Spinrad and Vonnegut. Style has nothing to do with it; in fact, New Thing writers can get away with the most atrocious style provided only their content reflects the devaluation of values.

By my judgement, Zelazny is not a New Thing writer in any sense of the word; he is a good writer because he is true to himself. We need more like him, and the present environment of science fiction is not conducive to their emergence, more's the pity. Perhaps, Mr. White, your new role as an editor can help change this situation.

Yours for the Second Foundation,
John J. Pierce, liaison officer

I commend my editorial in this issue to you, John. —TW

Dear Ted:

I picked up the new AMAZING yesterday and found it rather interesting. When I first read *Star Kings* around 1951 it really hooked me and I read it three more times before returning it to the library . . . something I had never done before. I'd had fond memories of it and had been pleasantly surprised when I found the sequels in AMAZING a few years ago, dug up a second-hand copy of the original, and re-read it. It still stood up, while another space opera from the same era, Leinster's *Last Spaceship*, hadn't. (But the latter book is cobbled together of separate novelettes, without editing to join them properly. It is also, as I recall, of much earlier original vintage.) Anyhow, I missed read-

ing the novelette in FANTASTIC a few months ago, but found this sequel enjoyable. However, some things bugged me. Like, I kept wondering how radar would reveal anything of events 1,000 light years away when radar waves travel at the speed of light and so wouldn't return to the space ship for 2,000 years. Also, I was bothered by the almost racist attitude of the superiority of man over all other Galactic life forms. Hamilton seems to regard all the alien intelligent life forms as animals who had learned to do tricks. I found his supercilious attitude most annoying.

Both the editorial and letter column were excellent. I am glad to see the return of a letter column, especially so well edited a one as this. I find it hard to imagine that good letters like these were being written with no hope of publication.

Ed Meskys

Just a little trick I picked up in editing fanzine letter columns, Ed. Actually, though, you are right: I too was surprised at the quality of letters we received. However, this column, under my editorship, has printed almost all the letters which have come in—which is to say, not that many. It seems to me that many of the fans who have been squawking about the dearth of prozine letter columns are not really responding to the presence of this column—although I hope the situation will improve. —TW

Dear Mr. White:

First, let me say that I'm glad to see the letter department back with AMAZING. It's the second-best department of any magazine (after the Editorial).

"The Horror from the Magellanic" was the best story in the May issue. I agree with you, it is Hamilton's best short novel. (Did I say that? —TW)

Why not bring AMAZING (and FANTASTIC) out monthly? I think that is the only improvement you could make to both magazines.

J. Collinson

Dear Mr. White:

So AMAZING has a new managing editor.

I'm glad to see the letter column restored. I hope that it is in each issue from now on.

But still you lack some important features. One: a book review section. This is something that I personally miss. The reviews in the previous issues are what is needed. If you can get big name authors to review books for the mag, that would be great. (How about the reviews in this issue? —TW)

Two: cut down on reprints. If you have to have them, use some of the classics from the past such as the works of John W. Campbell or even reprint the original "Skylark of Space" by E.E. Smith. (As you'll note, the reprints have reached a new minimum in this issue—and we will be using the older, more "classic" stories when possible. —TW)

Three: how about printing worthwhile first stories. Why not have a contest? The lifeblood of any mag is its authors. Find these unpublished authors that have a chance and help them mature into great pro writers. Surely in that slush pile there must be something worthwhile. (We are understaffed, and the slush pile tends to get short shrift. But I am receptive to new authors. The problem is that we are being shown more good stories right now than we can use. And I certainly don't want to be locked into a "first" story in each issue, as another magazine has done, simply as a matter of format. —TW)

Four: Get some of the big name pro

writers for the mag. What are the possibilities of getting new stories by Asimov, Bradbury, Zelazny, Delany, Schmitz, Norton and others? The mag needs them. (*The chances vary according to the author. But we have a Schmitz on hand, and I don't regard authors like Silverberg, Ellison and Hensley as Small Potatoes, either.* —TW)

I also suggest that you have a regular section telling about the contents of the next issue and what will be coming up in later issues. (*But I don't always know the lineup that far in advance. I can tell you that next issue will feature "Sons of Man" by Greg Benford, and "A Sense of Direction" by Alexei Panshin—but the rest of the issue is still in flux. Our advantage is flexibility. The Ellison story in this issue was offered us only a short time before we put this issue together, for instance. We snapped it up.* —TW)

Michael Walsh

Dear Ted:

I congratulate you on the July issue of AMAZING. It was . . . well, amazing! If the standards set up by this issue continue, I see no reason why AMAZING will not become "The World's Leading Science-Fiction Magazine" in practice as well as theory.

Perhaps it's not typical, but my favorite parts of a sf mag are the features. Therefore, I especially enjoyed the editorial, the book reviews and the fanzine reviews. It is in regard to the fanzine reviews that I really want to express thanks. The loss of the fmz review columns in prozines was one of the factors in the decline of fandom in the mid and late fifties. I hope your revival of the reviews can repair some of that damage. And John D. Berry is an excellent choice for reviewer.

Of course, AMAZING is not perfect

yet. The reprints are still a problem. I don't like them, but as you say, it's better to have a partially-reprinted AMAZING than no AMAZING at all. Perhaps the improvement of the magazine will increase circulation enough to warrant all new stories. A few more things that I'd like to mention: 1) New covers and more illustrations are needed. I realize that takes money, but maybe it'll come in time. 2) Why don't you print full addresses in the lettercol? (*Because many letters don't have them, and I have been receiving letters sans their original envelopes. If letter-writers will send their letters to the address at the opening of this column, I'll be able to include addresses as well—perhaps with our next issue.* —TW)

Oh, yes. I read the stories, too. Comments: "Up the Line," if part one is any indication, will be a Hugo contender for best novel. Ditto for your "Only Yesterday" for best short story. I am not kidding; I think it is the best short story I've read this year. (*I blush. But you encourage me to consider writing more stories for the magazines, something I've been a little hesitant to do, inasmuch as I write so much else for them.* —TW)

I realize that this letter is much too praising for you to print, but I just wanted to give you my opinions anyway. Best of luck!

Bob Roehm

We print brickbats; why shouldn't we print the kudos as well? Actually, we print all the letters it seems to us have something to say, whether or not we agree with them —TW

Dear Sirs:

Why do you print "The Science of Man"?

I suppose that sounds like a cranky, or maybe a frivolous question. Why

shouldn't you print a science column, you might reply.

Well, maybe my question should have been, "why print science columns in science fiction mags?" Every magazine I pick up seems to have one these days. Okay, I can see a column by Willy Ley. I can see one by Good Doctor Asimov. But Leon E. Stover? Who is Leon E. Stover? What has he ever done for science fiction? (After reading his "The Visit" in your companion magazine, FANTASTIC, I might better ask what has he done to science fiction?) Mr. Stover appears to be an anthropologist. This is novel, but it doesn't seem to make him much of an authority on the hard sciences, and when he descends to movie reviews (your March issue), he's just being ridiculous. At first I thought you'd republished one of Mr. Janifer's movie reviews under the wrong heading by mistake. Stover's columns read more like editorials than science columns; he seems mostly to be pushing his own opinions, and not much else.

I read science fiction for the fiction, not the science. If I want science, I'll pick up a Mentor paperback. "The Science of Man" doesn't seem to have much to do with sf, or science, so why

not drop it and expand your (excellent) book reviews or run another story in its place?

J. Edwards

P.S.: What happened to the typography in the July issue? It looks *terrible!* The whole magazine looks like a scrapbook, with stories in dozens of different type styles, and the serial in a blotchy type that gave me a headache. Arghhh! You may (or may not) be pleased to hear that next issue we inaugurate a new science column, "The Science in Science Fiction" by Dr. Greg Benford. Dr. Benford (who, by coincidence, also wrote the cover story) is a physicist and will examine, in each column, the scientific validity of ideas both common and uncommon to sf, discrediting some, and suggesting others. I predict it's a column that will appeal strongly to both readers and sf writers. As for the typography of our July issue (and the August issue of our companion magazine, FANTASTIC), this was a result of a change in typesetters, and has been rectified with this issue, as you've already noticed. I share your feelings on the subject, since I proofed the galleys and suffered several headaches therefrom!

-TW

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